



**HERNANDO COUNTY WATERWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 16, 2022**



Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Hernando Beach Marine Group Inc. Training Center  
4340 Calienta Street, Hernando Beach, FL 34607

Advertised: Friday, February 11, 2022, The Hernando Sun (CLK22-024)

The meeting agenda and back-up material are available online at:  
<https://www.hernandocounty.us/departments/departments-n-z/public-works/aquatic-services/waterways-advisory-committee/agendas-and-minutes>

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Kathryn Birren called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Attendance
Kathryn Birren	Vice Chairman	Present
Mike Fulford	Member	Present
Sarah Hill	Member	Present
Mike Senker	Member	Present
Chris Licata	Member	Present
Wayne Dukes	Commissioner / Liaison	Absent
Scott Herring	Department of Public Works Director / County Engineer	Absent
Keith Kolasa	Aquatic / Waterways Services Manager	Present
Steve Kelly	Corporal / Marine Patrol Officer	Absent
Tina Duenninger	Co. Administration / DPW Executive Office Manager	Present

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chairman Kathryn Birren requested at this time to present Mr. Chuck Morton with a letter and certificate of appreciation scheduled under Old Business Item 5, Chuck Morton Farewell.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**5. Chuck Morton Farewell**

Vice Chairman Kathryn Birren presented Mr. Chuck Morton with a letter and certificate of appreciation from the Board of County Commissioners in recognition of his years of service as a member on the former Port Authority and now Waterways Advisory Committee. Mr. Keith Kolasa presented Mr. Morton with a reef ball.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

**MOTION:** Mr. Mike Fulford motioned to nominate Ms. Kathryn Birren as Chairman of the Waterways Advisory Committee for the 2022 calendar year. Mr. Mike Senker seconded. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mike Fulford motioned to nominate Ms. Sarah Hill as Vice Chairman of the Waterways Advisory Committee for the 2022 calendar year. Ms. Kathryn Birren seconded. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

### **APPROVAL / MODIFICATION OF AGENDA (Limited to Staff and Committee Only)**

Old Business Item 5, Chuck Morton Farewell, was moved up on the agenda following the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no other changes made to the agenda.

### **SUNSHINE LAW AND CODE OF ETHICS OVERVIEW – Presentation by Assistant County Attorney Maureen Sikora**

Ms. Maureen Sikora, Assistant County Attorney, provided an overview of the Sunshine Law and Code of Ethics. Ms. Sikora reviewed Government in the Sunshine Law open meetings with the Committee. Certain requirements of Sunshine Law meetings include notice requirements, public input, recording of members' votes, instances when members can abstain from voting, and meeting minutes which must be taken and made available to the public. Ms. Sikora referenced the Sunshine Law news articles distributed to the Committee members prior to the meeting.

The Guide to the Sunshine Amendment and Code of Ethics was reviewed. Ms. Sikora noted Form 8B Memorandum of Voting Conflict form, which should be made available at each meeting and is to be filled out by members when abstaining from voting.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 15, 2021**

**MOTION:** Mr. Mike Fulford motioned to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2021 Waterways Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Chris Licata seconded. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

### **MARINE PATROL REPORT – Corporal Steve Kelly**

Mr. Steve Snell advised Corporal Steve Kelly was on vacation and had requested he attend the meeting on his behalf. Upon query by Mr. Mike Fulford, Mr. Snell responded there were two full time marine deputies on vessels for the county at this time. He advised he was retired and presently served as a volunteer. The Committee thanked him for his service.

In response to Mr. Steve Barton, Mr. Steve Snell indicated the marine deputies try to work different shifts in their approach to be proactive and noted there were no speeding violations on a recent shrimp boat observed at 3:00 a.m. recently.

Mr. Chris Licata queried the county's Code Enforcement and Sheriff's Office coordination regarding waterways. Mr. Steve Snell responded the deputies rely on Code Enforcement for rules and anything the deputies need to tackle a case, Code Enforcement is onboard to assist. Mr. Mike Fulford clarified there were five Code Enforcement officers and one supervisor for the whole county. He noted the county Ordinances were enforced by Code Enforcement, and the Sheriff's Office, along with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), was responsible for enforcing the criminal code.

Ms. Maureen Sikora left the meeting at this time.

### **NEW BUSINESS – Withlacoochee River Hazards**

Mr. Keith Kolasa displayed pictures provided in the agenda packet and gave kudos to the Sheriff's Office

marine deputies for inspecting and finding debris hazards along the Withlacoochee River. It was noted most of the floating hazards in the river was from within Hernando County.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Revisions to Proposed Ordinance on Mooring of Commercial Vessels at Boat Ramps**

Mr. Keith Kolasa advised a meeting was held with the County Attorney's Office and changes were made to the Proposed Ordinance on Mooring of Commercial Vessels at Boat Ramps based on discussion held at the last Committee meeting. Mr. Kolasa noted he would provide the Committee with a copy of the revised Proposed Ordinance when available and would keep the Committee apprised as to when a public hearing would be scheduled before the Board of County Commissioners.

### **2. Updates to Weeki Wachee River Dredge and State Road Canal Dredge Projects**

Mr. Keith Kolasa announced the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) was scheduled to hold a public meeting on March 1 to discuss the Weeki Wachee River Dredge plans. Mr. Kolasa noted the contractor had begun mobilizing equipment. He further noted the Board of County Commissioners had approved the contract for the State Road Canal Dredge project and Notice to Proceed was being coordinated as the project must be completed by November 15, 2022.

It was noted that the March 1 meeting was to be held at the Hernando Beach Marine Group Inc. Training Center beginning at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Keith Kolasa advised there were no plans to shut down Rogers Park nor the river.

### **3. Hunters Lake Aquatic Plant Maintenance**

Mr. Keith Kolasa advised quotes were received earlier in the day for the Hunters Lake Aquatic Plant Maintenance project and it was anticipated to get maintenance done by the time dry season began.

### **4. Coastal Conservation Association Partnership for 2022 Artificial Reef Projects**

Mr. Keith Kolasa announced the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) held a fundraiser last year raising approximately \$110,000. The CCA chose to donate \$11,000 to Hernando County for reef deployments, which would need to go before the Board of County Commissioners for approval. An additional \$15,000 will be donated for a living shoreline project at Jenkins Creek for a collaborative project with Florida Sea Grant and IFAS.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mike Senker motioned to recommend the Board of County Commissioners accept the donation from the Coastal Conservation Association in the amount of \$11,000 for reef deployments. Mr. Chris Licata seconded. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mike Senker motioned to recommend the Board of County Commissioners accept the donation from the Coastal Conservation Association in the amount of \$15,000 for living shoreline project at Jenkins Creek. Mr. Chris Licata seconded. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

### **1. Hunters Lake Canal Dredging**

Mr. Keith Kolasa advised the permit for the Hunters Lake Canal dredging was in the process of being renewed as the project would not be completed by the Summer and he would keep the Committee apprised.

## **2. Weeki Wachee Springs Protection Zone**

Mr. Keith Kolasa advised there was a section of the Weeki Wachee River from the early take out to Rogers Park being proposed to be approved as a protection zone. The item was scheduled to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on February 22 and would then be forwarded to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for consideration. Mr. Mike Fulford clarified the intent of the statewide Springs Protection Zone and noted enforcement would be the responsibility of FWC.

Discussion ensued regarding enforcement on the river.

Ms. Bea Shafer inquired whether additional personnel could be requested for enforcement through the BOCC at the time the item was to be discussed. Mr. Mike Fulford proposed Chairman Kathryn Birren write a letter through the Department Director to the BOCC Chairman to consider coordinating enforcement with the Sheriff's Office when FWC grants the proposed protection zone. The Committee concurred.

## **3. 2022 Meeting Schedule Reminder**

Mr. Keith Kolasa displayed and reviewed the approved 2022 meeting schedule with the Committee. Chairman Kathryn Birren suggested having different meeting locations throughout the year. Mr. Kolasa noted he would look into it.

## **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Ms. Bea Shafer asked for a status update on the Pine Island project and whether a project manager had been hired. Mr. Keith Kolasa responded interviews were scheduled the first week in March and anticipated having a project manager onboard. He stated the Pine Island project would be delegated to the project manager. In the interim, signage and channel markers were being replaced on Pine Island. Chairman Kathryn Birren requested a status update on the project manager be scheduled on the next agenda.

Mrs. Diane Greenwell commented there is an airboat charter in Bayport beginning operations at 7:00 a.m. and ending late at night, sometimes 2:30 a.m., which was incompatible with this area. She indicated there was a need for curfews to be implemented from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and would be speaking before the Board of County Commissioners and Planning & Zoning Commission regarding the matter. Mr. Greenwell commented that the airboats come through the Tarpon canal.

Discussion ensued regarding the Airboat and Noise Ordinances currently in place.

Mrs. Greenwell indicated she wanted to bring the issue up to start looking into it as she believed it would become a bigger issue as more people moved to the area and want to start businesses. Mr. Steve Snell advised he had recently stopped the yellow airboat and they were in compliance.

There were no other citizens' comments.

## **WATERWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE / STAFF COMMENTS**

1. Kathryn Birren, Chairman
2. Sarah Hill, Vice Chairman
3. Mike Fulford, Member
4. Mike Senker, Member
5. Chris Licata, Member
6. Keith Kolasa, Aquatic/Waterways Services Manager
7. Scott Herring, Department of Public Works Director/County Engineer

Mr. Mike Fulford thanked Mr. Steve Snell for being present at the meeting on his own time and articulating on the enforcement aspects.

**OTHER – Waterways Advisory Committee Agenda Requests for Future Meetings**

There was no other business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

**Upcoming Meeting(s):**

The next regular meeting of the Waterways Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 7:00 P.M., in the Hernando Beach Marine Group Inc. Training Center, 4340 Calienta Street, Hernando Beach, FL 34607.