



**HERNANDO COUNTY WATERWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 17, 2022**



Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Time: 7:00 P.M.

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

Advertised: Friday, August 12, 2022, The Hernando Sun (CLK22-139)

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**

Chairman Kathryn Birren called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Attendance
Kathryn Birren	Chairman	Present
Sarah Hill	Vice Chairman	Present
Mike Fulford	Member	Present
Mike Senker	Member	Absent
Chris Licata	Member	Absent
Wayne Dukes	Commissioner / Liaison	Absent
Scott Herring	Department of Public Works Director / County Engineer	Present
Keith Kolasa	Aquatic / Waterways Services Manager	Present
Eric Davis	Waterways Project Manager	Present
Steve Snell	Marine Patrol Officer	Present
Matt Lapalme	Marine Patrol Officer	Present
Dominique Holmes	Public Information Coordinator	Present
Tina Duenninger	DPW Executive Office Manager	Present

**INVOCATION**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

New Business Item 5, Hunters Lake Canal, was moved up on the agenda following the Approval of Minutes – June 15, 2022. There were no other changes made to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 15, 2022**

**MOTION:** Mr. Mike Fulford motioned to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2022 Waterways Advisory Committee meeting. Vice Chairman Sarah Hill seconded. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 5. Hunters Lake Canal

Mr. Keith Kolasa advised the bid specifications for the Hunters Lake Canal project were completed and in the Purchasing Department for review. Ms. Dawn Roth provided photos for the record, indicating she resides next to the boat ramp and would like the canal dredged. She suggested the ramp be opened from dusk until dawn rather than 24-hours daily and expressed the Sheriff's Office was not helpful in enforcing the law on the canal as shooting occurs near her home and not within the designated parameters.

At the request of Mr. Mike Fulford, Mr. Keith Kolasa noted the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) 2019 Ordinance established for Hunters Lake related to hunting, indicating there are 10 canals with signage posted prohibiting hunting to keep hunters away from residences. Mr. Kolasa believed ducks could be hunted in the main lake early in the morning and early evening, not during the night.

Deputy Lapalme stated he would run the issue up the chain of command to see if a plan could be put in place to work with FWC and address the issues. He advised FWC is the enforcing agency and the Sheriff's Office is the backup, noting the hunters need to get caught in the act. Discussion ensued. Mr. Scott Herring advised Hunters Lake Boat Ramp was scheduled for discussion on the Board of County Commissioners' meeting agenda on August 23, 2022.

Mr. Erik Walasek queried what was next regarding tussocks. Mr. Keith Kolasa responded Mosquito Control had gone out for the past two years spraying, with the most recent one week ago, and there was funding allocated in the fiscal year 2023 budget for tussock maintenance.

Discussion ensued bringing back a homeowners' association for Hunters Lake. At the request of Mr. Mike Fulford, Mr. Scott Herring provided a brief overview of the Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) process available for property owners on Hunters Lake. Mr. Fulford noted that Hunters Lake is owned by the FWC and that our future state representatives should be lobbied for funding.

## MARINE PATROL REPORT – Steve Snell

Deputy Lapalme stated it was his first time at the Waterways Advisory Committee meeting. He noted Hernando County had a lot of water and he and his partner were trying to switch up hours to work more evening hours for boaters coming back into the docks. During the weekend, their time was pressed spent patrolling the flats, canals, Weeki Wachee River, etc. Deputy Lapalme requested citizens bring any concerns directly to him or Deputy Snell.

Deputy Lapalme indicated there had been issues with getting repair parts for vessels due to manufacturing delays and everything was fixed for now. He advised there was a new shallow water vessel coming in which would eventually replace the skis, and an additional position (third) for a marine patrol officer had been funded in the next budget proposal.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Update on State Road Canal Dredging (County) and Weeki Wachee River Dredging (SWFWMD) <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/springs/weeki-wachee-channel-restoration-project>

Mr. Keith Kolasa noted the State Road Canal Dredging project was 95% dredged and cleanup of overflow needed to be completed. The Weeki Wachee River Dredging project was on hold due to permitting.

### 2. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Public Workshop on Weeki Wachee River Springs Protection Zone – August 2, 2022

Mr. Mike Fulford attended the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Public Workshop on the Weeki Wachee River Springs Protection Zone held on August 2, 2022. He

provided an overview on how the application for the Springs Protection Zone began and the FWC process. It was unknown at this time when the FWC hearing would be held. Mr. Fulford indicated Hernando County had made a substantive case there was damage to the Weeki Wachee River to prohibit mooring, beaching, and anchoring from the headwaters of the springs to Rogers Park. The residential portion of the river run was not grandfathered but was not considered to be in that river zone. Residents living along the proposed Springs Protection Zone would not be affected.

### **3. Pine Island Dredge – Design and Permitting**

Mr. Scott Herring stated the first budget hearing was scheduled to be held on September 13, 2022, and design and permitting for the Pine Island Dredge project was to be included in the budget. He explained Pine Island Dredge was funded in Pot 3 of the Restore Act, but if you have design and construction and any modifications are needed, it triggers the amendment process anywhere from three months to one year. Therefore, it is quicker for the County to pay for design and permitting while working on the application for construction in Pot 3 funds.

Upon query, Mr. Keith Kolasa responded the Pine Island canal is to be restored to where it's navigable.

### **4. Boat Ramp Dock Replacements**

Mr. Eric Davis announced approval to replace the boat ramp docks was received, a contractor was selected, and he was waiting for the plans from the contractor to move forward with permitting. He noted that once permitting was approved, Aquatics/Waterways Department would be installing the docks at Hernando Beach county ramps (both courtesy docks), and Bayport ramp (western most courtesy dock).

## **OLD BUSINESS – Adopted Ordinance on Mooring of Commercial Vessels at Boat Ramps – BOCC Adopted June 28, 2022**

The Ordinance on Mooring of Commercial Vessels at Boat Ramps was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on June 28, 2022. A copy of the adopted Ordinance was included in the agenda packet for the Committee's information. Chairman Kathryn Birren noted she had attended the BOCC meeting. She advised the sign at the Hernando Beach boat ramp specifying the old Ordinance and penalties for docking had been removed. Mr. Kolasa provided a review of the changes made to the adopted Ordinance.

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – FWC Vessel Turn-In Program, Derelict Vessel Prevention Efforts**

<https://myfwc.com/news/all-news/vtip-722/>

Mr. Keith Kolasa announced the program was established to have boats turned in before they become derelict vessels in canals and out in waters. He expressed this was a great program as Hernando County has derelict vessels that have been in the water for years. Mr. Mike Fulford inquired if the County's Public Information Office could issue a media release to the coastal residents advising them of the program. Mr. Scott Herring advised the FWC approved the program at its last meeting, but he was not sure whether the rule had been finalized and promulgated, so we would need to wait prior to issuing a media release. He indicated there was \$36.4 million in funding over four years and once the program was finalized by the FWC, the Committee would be advised, and a media release would be issued advising of the program and contact information. Mr. Fulford requested the item be brought back at the next meeting and have Mr. Herring provide an update on the program's enactment. Chairman Birren concurred.

It was noted the FWC was aware of the current derelict vessels on the coastline in Hernando and already had a list. Upon query by Chairman Birren, it was further noted Lieutenant Grover at the FWC would most likely have the current list.

## **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Ms. Valerie Shelter inquired on the status of the Hernando Beach Channel Seagrass Mitigation permit status. Mr. Keith Kolasa responded the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) monitoring results showed there were some growth areas and some offset areas that didn't work mitigation; however, DEP had released the County from monitoring. The Army Corps of Engineers report was being worked on for the offset areas and once released, then the permit application could be filed.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Chuck Morton stated the County received credit from the seagrass that grew back in the channel and that funding from hurricanes was appropriated by event.

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 the marine patrol unit for their attendance at the meeting and the residents of the Hunters Lake community, expressing appreciation for their input and feedback.

Chairman Kathryn Birren thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting. She requested citizens attending the next meeting bring a neighbor as discussion was to be held on having the meeting again at the Hernando County Building Division Training Facility, noting there were other issues and lakes to be addressed in other areas of the county.

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

Mr. Mike Fulford requested the FWC Vessel Turn-In Program, Derelict Vessel Prevention Efforts be brought back and added to the next meeting agenda.

There was no other business.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

## **Upcoming Meeting(s):**

The next regular meeting of the Waterways Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, at 7:00 P.M., location to be determined.