

SUMMARY MINUTES

Watershed Management Policy Board

January 26, 2006 – County Health and Human Services Division Office (Amtrak Station)

The following represents a summary of the topics discussed and follows the agenda of the above meeting (Attachment #1)

I. Call to Order

*Commissioner Thaell,
Chair*

At approximately 2:38 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chairman Cliff Thaell. Policy Board members in attendance included Hon. Cliff Thaell, Hon. Debbie Lightsey, Tom Kwadar and Skip Cook. Technical Support Committee Members in attendance included Joe Brown, John Buss, and Dr. Julie Harrington. County/City staff assigned to the Policy Board included Ben Pingree (County).

II. Overview of Policy Board's Establishment

*Commissioner Thaell -
Comissioner Lightsey,
Vice-Chair*

Commissioner Thaell noted that this group was formed after several years of work toward creating a comprehensive set of watershed management plans that do not ascribe to political boundaries but are unique to each watershed. He stated that this workgroup was one key element towards creating those plans and expressed his optimism at what the Policy Board would achieve over time.

Commissioner Lightsey stated that she had been working on creating this group, with Commissioner Thaell, for over a year. Now that the group had been formed, she looked forward to getting off to a good start and to addressing substantive issues soon.

III. Introduction of Policy Board Members & Technical Support Staff

Each Policy Board Member in attendance gave a brief overview of their background and expressed their optimism for the work that lies ahead for the Policy Board. Commissioner Thaell expressed that there was a need to better manage water quality and flood control and to manage the community's available resources toward these issues. He proposed identifying a common methodology for water quality data.

Commissioner Lightsey expressed her desire to focus on each watershed and to look at each watershed's unique characteristics (not their political boundaries). She hoped that the City and County could coordinate their capital projects as a result of the Policy Board's work.

IV. Review of Legal Issues

Laura Youmans

Laura Youmans, Assistant County Attorney provided a brief overview of how Florida's "Government in the Sunshine" laws would apply to the Policy Board (Attachment #2).

Included in this overview was a description that all Policy Board meetings (when 2 or more Board members join to discuss Policy Board topics) would be publicly noticed and available to the public. This also included a statement that financial disclosures would not be required from Policy Board or Technical Support Committee members.

V. Review of Interlocal Agreement – Policy Board Objectives/Mission

John Buss, City Stormwater Director and Joe Brown, County Engineer (Stormwater Director) provided an overview of the Policy Board's Objectives, as presented in the adopted interlocal agreement that created the Board (Attachment #3).

Included in their overview was a review of the key parts of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), as presented in the Interlocal agreement. Mr. Buss explained that the SAP outlined the key activities to be undertaken by the Policy Board during their first three years. He stated that there would be significant challenges to achieving all of the goals outlined in the SAP and that it would be important to not get too bogged down in the numerous small details that comprise each issue presented during the Board's first year. Joe Brown presented a timeline to the Policy Board for their first year. According to the timeline, each key SAP issue would come before the Board for initial review during the first year (Attachment #4).

The Policy Board reviewed the role of the Technical Support Committee and clarified that non-City or County staff members of the Committee should not be overburdened with collecting data and preparing documents. However, these individuals should be allowed to provide high level, technical guidance to the Policy Board based upon their intricate knowledge of the watershed management issues before the Board.

Commissioner Lightsey agreed that there was an initial need, in the first year, to familiarize the Board with all of the issues before them without necessarily resolving each one. Commissioner Thaell agreed that there was a learning curve present and that adequate time should be given to the process to improve the outcome of recommendations that will arise from the Policy Board.

Citizen Steve Urse from the Big Bend Environmental Forum asked whether the Policy Board would consider wastewater issues, such as the impacts of same to the water quality of Wakulla Springs. Commissioner Thaell noted that this was a related issue but not the primary role of the Watershed Management Policy Board. Commissioner Lightsey stated her belief that this group's mission was already extensively wide ranging and that another group could be formed for wastewater issues but that wastewater was not the role of the Policy Board.

Citizen Nancy Miller from the County's Water Resources Policy Committee requested that water quality data be made available to citizens. Commissioner Thaell indicated that all data collected would be made available.

At that time, Ben Pingree, Assistant to the County Administrator, provided an overview of the "Public Education and Participation" section of the interlocal agreement. As part of this presentation, Mr. Pingree noted the significant role toward enhanced public involvement ascribed by the County and City in creating the Policy Board. He reminded the Board that a thorough detailing of the Public Education component would be presented to the Policy Board at their upcoming meeting on March 16th.

VI. Discussion

No additional discussion was held by Policy Board members nor questions received from the public.

VII. Next Meeting (March 16th – Old Amtrack Station Community Room)

The Policy Board agreed to hold their next meeting on March 16th. Ben Pingree will send an additional e-mail to Policy Board members to confirm the time and location with public notice of the meeting following, thereafter.

VIII. Adjourn

After thanking Policy Board members, Technical Support Committee members and attending citizens and staff for their participation in this process, the meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Thaell, Chairman, at 3:55 p.m.