Council Minutes

May 11, 2009
10:00 a.m.

REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT
Chair, Commissioner Bill Dodson, City of Plant City
Secretary/Treasurer, Ms. Jill Collins, Hillsborough County Gubernatorial Appointee
Mayor Scott Black, Past Chair, City of Dade City
Vice Mayor Nina Bandoni, City of Safety Harbor
Commissioner Ron Barnett, City of Dunedin
Commissioner Kevin Beckner, Hillsborough County
Commissioner Neil Brickfield, Pinellas County
Commissioner Woody Brown, City of Largo
Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant, City of Palmetto
Commissioner Larry Bustle, Manatee County
Council Member Alison Fernandez, City of Temple Terrace
Mr. Julian Garcia, Jr., Hillsborough County Gubernatorial Appointee
Vice Mayor Al Halpern, City of St. Pete Beach
Mr. Robert Kersteen, Pinellas County Gubernatorial Appointee
Mr. Harry Kinnan, Manatee County Gubernatorial Appointee
Vice Mayor Bob Matthews, City of Seminole
Mayor Bob Minning, City of Treasure Island
Councilwoman Mary Mulhern, City of Tampa
Mr. Andy Núñez, Pinellas County Gubernatorial Appointee
Councilman Karl Nurse, City of St. Petersburg
Vice Mayor Kathleen Peters, City of South Pasadena
Council Member Carlen Petersen, City of Clearwater
Councilman Patrick Roff, City of Bradenton
Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd, Pinellas County Gubernatorial Appointee
Council Member Suzanne Vale, City of Oldsmar
Ms. Kim Vance, Hillsborough County Gubernatorial Appointee
Ms. Laura Woodard, Hillsborough County Gubernatorial Appointee
Vice Mayor Robert Worthington, City of Gulfport
Mr. Mike Downs, Alt., Ex-Officio, Department of Environmental Protection
Mr. Ming Gao, Ex-Officio, Florida Department of Transportation
Ms. Michelle Miller, Ex-Officio, Enterprise Florida
Mr. Todd Pressman, Ex-Officio, South West Florida Water Management District

REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT
Vice Chair, Commissioner Jack Mariano, Pasco County
Ms. Jane Bittner, Pinellas County Gubernatorial Appointee
Councilman Bob Consalvo, City of New Port Richey
Ms. Angeleah Kinsler, Hillsborough County Gubernatorial Appointee
Vice Mayor Robin Saenger, City of Tarpon Springs
Councilman Ed Taylor, City of Pinellas Park
Mr. Charles Waller, Pasco County Gubernatorial Appointee
Mr. Earl Young, Pasco County Gubernatorial Appointee
OTHERS PRESENT
Trisha Neasman, Planner, SWFWMD
Shawn College, Exec. Planner, Hillsborough Planning Commission
John Healey, Planner, Hillsborough County
Georgianne Ratliff, Wilson Miller
Elizabeth Abernethy, Wilson Miller
Bob Carpenter, SunWest
Jason Mickel, Planner, SWFWMD
Kartik Goyani, Project Manager, Epperson Ranch, LLC
Fina Grimes, Attorney, Hill Ward Henderson
Matthew Campbell, Assistant Director, P&D, City of Dunedin

STAFF PRESENT
Mr. Manny Pumarioega, Executive Director
Mr. Donald Conn, Legal Counsel
Ms. Wren Krahl, Director of Administration/Public Information
Mr. Avera Wynne, Planning Director
Mr. John Jacobsen, Accounting Manager
Ms. Suzanne Cooper, Principal Planner
Ms. Lori Denman, Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary
Mr. Marshall Flynn, Info Tech Mgr/GIS
Ms. Jessica Lunsford, Senior Planner
Mr. John Meyer, Principal Planner/DRI Coordinator
Mr. Patrick O’Neil, Senior Planner
Ms. Erika Wiker, Planner

Call to Order – Chair Dodson
The May 11, 2009 regular meeting of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council was called to order by Chair Dodson at 10:02 a.m.

The Invocation was given by Vice Mayor Matthews, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Recognitions:
Chair Dodson introduced new Council members:
   Vice Mayor Al Halpern, City of St. Pete Beach
   Council Member Suzanne Vale, City of Oldsmar
   Mr. Ming Gao, Ex-officio, FDOT

Roll Call -- Recording Secretary
A quorum was present.

Voting Conflict Report -- Recording Secretary
No voting conflicts were filed.

1. Approval of Minutes – Secretary/Treasurer Collins
The minutes from the April 13, 2009 regular Meeting were approved (Black/Beckner).
2. **Budget Committee – Secretary/Treasurer Collins**
   
   A. The Financial Report for the period ending 3/31/09 was approved (Black/Todd).
   
   B. The Budget Committee met this morning and was presented with the 2008/2009 Mid-Year Budget Amendment. The overall budget increased almost $52,000 primarily due to the following:
   
   - Federal Revenue increased $189K because of the addition of Florida Catastrophic Planning and Economic Analysis & Disaster Resiliency projects. Additionally, Eckerd College Mitigation Plan was extended beyond 9/30/08 and Hazardous Material Transportation Safety Act funding was increased.
   
   - State Revenue decreased $229K due to reductions in DCA RPC funding, One Bay available carryforward from 9/30/08 and the 9/30/08 audit adjustment which removed carryforward for Decision Support GIS and reflected it as an increase in fund balance.
   
   - Fees & Contracts increased $34K due to the addition of TBARTA Support Services, Host Community Relocation Plan & Economic Impact Analysis Natural Disaster. These increases were partially offset by reductions in Disaster Recovery Guide, Statewide Regional Evacuation Study, Tampa Bay Water & DRIs. These reductions are the result of timing between fiscal years.
   
   - Appropriated Fund Balance increased $71K to offset the projected deficit. An additional $134K was added to fund balance and removed from state revenue for FY 09 by the auditors regarding recognition of revenue in the appropriate fiscal year.
   
   - Other Revenue/Interest decreased $17K primarily due to a decrease in anticipated interest income based to lower interest rates than anticipated in the initial budget.

   The Budget Committee unanimously approved the proposed Mid-Year Budget Amendment included in the agenda packet.

   Motion to approve the 2008/2009 Mid-Year Budget Amendment (Todd/Núñez).

3. **Consent Agenda – Chair Dodson**
   
   A revised Development Order Amendment Report, Item #3.D.-Tampa Triangle, was distributed. The revisions were necessary to reflect the accurate name of the project, local government, and dates of prior approvals as identified under the “Recommendation” section of the report.

   A. **Budget and Contractual**
   
   Economic Development District Funding

   Staff has submitted a grant application for the Economic Development District for an additional $10,189.00 of funding to supplement the current three year amount of $159,000.00 from the United States Economic Development Administration. These grant funds require a fifty-fifty match. The grant period runs from 01/01/2008 - 12/31/2010.

   Action Recommended: Motion to authorize the Chair to sign the required grant application documents and execute the grant agreement with EDA.
B. Intergovernmental Coordination & Review (IC&R) Program
   1. IC&R Reviews by Jurisdiction
   2. April 2009 IC&R Database
   Action Recommended: None. For Information Only.

C. DRI Development Order Reports (DOR) - None

D. DRI Development Order Amendment Reports (DOAR)
   DRI # 140 – Tampa Triangle, Hillsborough County
   Action Recommended: Approve staff report.

E. Notice of Proposed Change (NOPC) Reports
   1. DRI # 16 – Tampa Bay Center/Bucs, City of Tampa
   2. DRI # 103 – Cooper Creek, Manatee County
   3. DRI # 258 – Epperson Ranch, Pasco County
   Action Recommended: Approve staff report(s).

F. Annual Report Summaries (ARS)/Biennial Report Summaries (BRS) - None

G. DRI Status Report
   Action Recommended: None. For Information Only.

H. Local Government Comprehensive Plan Amendments (LGCP)
   Due to statutory and contractual requirements, the following reports have been
   transmitted to the Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA) and the
   appropriate local government in accordance with Rule 29H-1.903(3), F.A.C.
   1. DCA # 09-1AR, Pinellas County (adopted)
   Action Recommended: For Information Only

   The following report(s) are presented for Council action:
   2. DCA # 09-1, Hillsborough County
   3. DCA # 09-1AR, City of Clearwater
   4. DCA # 09-1, City of Dunedin
   5. DCA # 09-1ER, City of Plant City (adopted)
   Action Recommended: Approve staff report(s).

The Consent Agenda was approved (Mulhern/Nurse).

4. Item(s) Removed from Consent Agenda and Addendum Item(s) - None

5. DRI # 267 – FINAL REPORT - Sunwest Harbortowne, Pasco County
   Mr. John Meyer, DRI Coordinator, TBRPC, provided the staff report.

   Correspondence from the Gulfcoast Conservancy was distributed. Council staff has reviewed this
   correspondence and it does not propose any changes to the Final Report.

   The Sunwest Harbortowne DRI, as evidenced on the provided map, is a 1,071.70-acre, project
   located along the western side of U.S. 19, less than a mile south of the Hernando County line and
along the southern boundary of Aripeka Road. The boundaries on the map include recent revisions. There was a land swap that was approved by the Water Management District (WMD) of a 90-acre parcel for parcels totaling 1,267 acres. The official approval is subject to approval of the Development Order and Pasco County Comp Plan Amendments. The core of non-residential uses are primarily located within three isolated parcels running along U.S. 19 as well as within the Marina Village. A map of the Council’s natural resources of regional significance shows that most of the natural resources are protected, but they are subject to ground-truthing. They are identified as wetlands or conservation areas on the proposed master development plan. Any impacts to these resources shall be done in accordance with Council policies.

Some of the more noted recommended conditions in the Council’s Final Report are: specific approval of a single phase project with a 2018 build-out, which includes 2,500 residential units, 250,000 sq. ft. of commercial, 50,000 sq. ft. of office, 500 marina slips, and a golf course. Impacts to natural resources of regional significance shall only occur if justified to be of overriding public interest. Mitigation for justified impact should be at the ratios described in Council policy. In order to minimize the conflicts between the Florida Black Bear and humans for this project the Development Order shall incorporate the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission’s recommendations to create a landscape buffer north of Aripeka Road and use a small-medium sized wildlife crossing at Aripeka Road to discourage movement of the Florida Black Bear to the south. The applicant will be responsible for preparation of the following plans: habitat management, stormwater pollution prevention, integrated pest management, golf course design and management, surface and groundwater quality monitoring, and hurricane evacuation. The applicant will also be responsible for creating a biennial transportation monitoring program to ensure that the number of trips do not exceed those that were proposed.

The applicant’s mitigation for the project’s impact on hurricane shelter and evacuation will go through further coordination with Pasco County Emergency Management, as documented within the Development Order.

The applicant has proposed a voluntary affordable housing mitigation program, as identified on page 59 of the Final Report. This will also be recognized and incorporated into the Development Order. It is consistent with the rates that have been approved for other recent Final Reports adopted by the Council.

The last recommended major condition is incorporation of the Florida Division of Historical Resources recommendations regarding the requirement or final assessment and/or protection of the two recognized historical sites described on page 60 of the Final Report.


An aerial map of the location shows a number of fresh water lakes that have been created as a result of mining on the property. This property has been mined for 75 years and the product that came from that mining went into Little Road and U.S. 19 construction. The majority of the property being proposed for development has been permitted for mining. It is under active mining right now, and there are areas where mining has yet to commence. The proposal got smaller because of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) land exchange. This land use exchange was controversial but the Governing Board, on March 31st, voted to approve the
exchange contingent on final approval of the Development Order.

The lake on the property is a 165-acre fresh water lake and the applicant wanted to design a resort around this. The other very significant feature that we planned around is a County Park that is currently being designed and permitted. The County Park is 313-acres and was originally a part of the parent tract. As part of a previous settlement agreement between the property owner and Pasco County, the property owner agreed to contribute $3 million to the development of the park. That park is very important to Pasco County because they only had four public access points to the Gulf and this will make the fifth access point. Improving the deep water canal is a major part of developing the park. The park will have swimming facilities, beach, and public boat ramps with access to the Gulf.

There are 381-acres of wetlands as well as other wetlands on the coastal property that are being donated. Wildlife on site includes an eagle nest which is being preserved and 88 gopher tortoises which will be relocated. Manatees have been sighted in the canal, which is not a part of the development parcel itself. The Scrub jay and other significant birds were found on the property that is being exchanged with the WMD.

The parcel along the eastern side of the feature lake will include a 250-room hotel. Pasco County would like to have our land use exchange allow up to 500 rooms, however that would not increase the impacts. The hotel will have meeting facilities, an 18-hole championship golf course and an upscale clubhouse. Marina Village includes a fresh water marina with the capability for 150 wet slips, and 350 dry slips. There are no direct connections between this marina or any of the lakes to the deep water canal. Instead we are proposing a boat lift which would allow boat access by lifting boats across a berm and into the canal. We are conditioned by permit to only allow a maximum of 45 boats in that canal per day. The rest of the resort development is predominately residential, with a wide variety of product types from mid-rise condominiums, townhouses, and single-family detached units. In terms of non-residential development we have restaurants and specialty shops planned in Marina Village. We want Marina Village to be a destination for the public, not just for the visitors to the resort. The commercial on U.S. 19 will serve the people visiting and the people who live in the resort community. One of the conditions that Pasco County is placing on us is that we make sure the development of the retail along U.S. 19 is architecturally significant and identifies with the resort.

The project will have 2,500 units, 250,000 sq. ft. of retail, 50,000 sq. ft. of office, and 250 hotel rooms, which may be increased to 500 rooms. That increase would be achieved by exchanging residual for more hotel rooms. It would not increase the impacts. Also, 18 holes of golf and the boat slips associated with the marina.

I would like to mention briefly the plan amendment. DRIs are required to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and we have to have a Plan Amendment associated with this project. This project has multiple designations - coastal lands, conservation lands, residential-6, residential-9, retail, and office. We are taking the entire project and converting it to planned development, a new category in Pasco County’s updated Comp Plan that allows you to plan the development as a unified project and also gives Pasco County control over the design. Any time you amend the Comprehensive Plan in the coastal high hazard area, which this project falls into, state law says the only way you can amend the plan is if you reduce what can happen there. You can’t amend it to allow more development than is currently allowed.

We have to reclaim all of the previously mined areas, we have to prepare a habitat management
plan, and we have been directed to focus attention on the Florida black bear habitat to the north. Florida Fish & Wildlife has indicated that in their opinion the best thing for the bear population is to recognize habitat needs to stop at Aripeka Road (to the north) and have asked the applicant to help enhance and restore that habitat. We are also conditioned to adhere to the Pasco County Manatee protection plan for the canal. We will adhere to the eagle habitat guidelines, implement and continue to monitor water quality, and have a public education program for all of the environmental features. We are required to prepare an all-hazards plan for the fresh water marina. The wetland impacts have been minimized and will have to be permitted. We will do an integrated pest management plan and the golf course will be developed with FDEP’s Florida Green Industries best management practices.

For hurricane preparedness a comprehensive emergency management plan to address evacuation and recovery will be prepared. As Mr. Meyer mentioned, we are entering into the same voluntary affordable housing mitigation program that has been required of other developments of regional impact. The transportation study has been accepted technically by all agencies and we are in the process of negotiating a proportionate share that will range between $25-$30 million. Once the proportionate share is established we will work with all the agencies, and in particular Pasco County, to determine which improvements they believe would be the most beneficial for their transportation network.

Benefits to the community are jobs, tax revenue and we believe the regional County Park offers a great opportunity. This part of Pasco County really hasn’t had much development and we believe this would be a major stimulus for that area. Pasco County and the Pasco Economic Development Council jointly sponsored a Urban Land Institute (ULI) study of Pasco County and ULI looked at this project and said they thought it would be very beneficial.

Questions & Comments:

Councilman Nurse: Regarding Map #3 in the Final Report, Natural Resources of Regional Significance. Is the project chipping away at a whole series of wetlands? I think you said there has to be some overwhelming . . .

Mr. Meyer: It’s a part of our regional policies. It has to be of overriding public interest.

Councilman Nurse: What is overwhelming public interest if they are destroying wetlands?

Ms. Cooper: We don’t determine that. That is determined by the county in the Development Order. The policy of the Regional Planning Council is that regionally significant natural resources should not be impacted except in cases of overriding public interest.

Councilman Nurse: Maybe I don’t understand.

Ms. Cooper: Council adopted a map which shows what we consider to be regionally significant. Sometimes we add to those maps in our reports because of the way the maps were drawn and sometimes we take things away. Ultimately that map will be ground truthed and the actual boundaries of the habitat that are determined to be regionally significant will be determined. Then in the development order process there has to be justification that there is an overwhelming need to impact those resources and our policies recommend a mitigation ratio for replacement or recreation based on what type of habitat it is.

Councilman Nurse: Is there any reason they couldn’t do the development without destroying the wetlands?

Ms. Cooper: The permitting agencies who are responsible for wetlands, local
Councilman Nurse: government decide that.
Can we recommend that we proceed with the project without destroying the wetlands?
Chair Dodson:
We have that prerogative. That’s why they are here for the review of a DRI. We can make a statement.
Ms. Cooper:
You will notice on the map that we have regionally significant natural resources that are not wetlands. There is a lot of good habitat on that site. Why don’t we move on and come back to this.
Chair Dodson:
I don’t understand the whole concept of a project like this because we have such an overstock of housing now and you are taking a chunk of pristine Florida. I have real environmental concerns. I have concerns in that you have a canal coming in that is going to have to be widened or deepened so you will have to be in there with a method of deepening the project and it’s known Manatee habitat. You will be putting a lot of boats over top of it and I wonder how you can get the Army Corps of Engineers, Fish & Wildlife, and everyone else to go along with this? I know the issues we are fighting in Boca Ceiga Bay for that sort of thing. I just don’t understand why we are letting this huge chunk of natural Florida go away. I know the people who live in that area, in Aripeka, aren’t pleased with it.

Council Member Vale:
I apologize, could you please go over your land swap again?
Ms. Ratliff:
The smaller parcel to the east is along Aripeka Road and it is 90 acres. It is currently owned by the Water Management District. The other two larger parcels that are to the west are owned by Sunwest Development Corporation and the actual exchange is between the existing 396-acre Sunwest parcel to the south that’s equivalent in value to the 90 acres, and to the north there is a property that is in coastal marsh that is being donated. That’s done to even out the value of the exchange and then the donation is on top of that.

Councilwoman Mulhern:
Can you point out to me on the map where Aripeka is located?
Ms. Ratliff:
It isn’t on the map, it is to the north. Not enough traffic from this development would go north to constitute a regional impact. I can assure you that Pasco County will look at that.

Councilwoman Mulhern:
We have a world class artist, James Rosenquist, who has his home studio in this area and tragically there was a fire and it burned down. I think of that as a historically significant thing and it should be considered. I’m not sure where it is located, I believe it is north of the fishing village. Also, I don’t know how you can call this redevelopment. It’s not developed so how can it be redevelopment? When you talk about giving Pasco an identity, this area certainly has an identity as wetlands and as a natural place.

Ms. Ratliff:
It is an active mine and many of those wetlands will be preserved. If redeveloping a mine isn’t considered redeveloping, then it would be new development.

Councilwoman Mulhern:
What are they mining?
Ms. Ratliff:
Rock.
Mr. Pressman:
The SWFWMD Governing Board spent two months looking at this issue. We had dozens of our scientists, geologists, and hydrologists study this. Staff came to a very firm decision which was that the exchange of the
properties was a priority, not only desired, but a priority. It took the
governing board two months looking through the issue and hearing from
the public to come to a unanimous decision that this swap of lands, and
we are talking about hundreds of acres, was not just something we
wanted, but something that was a priority. We heard from quite a number
of Pasco County representatives. Commissioner Mariano spoke with me
about Pasco’s desire for this site. It completes a grand park area as the
applicants laid out, and it goes very far in saving hundreds of acres and
keeping hundreds of acres for aquifer recharge and there are good
hydrologic soils. Beyond that there were lands that fit into a puzzle that
had emerged in that area so that there was a much larger area saved along
with other SWFWMD lands. At our hearings I want to relate to you that
I don’t recall hearing from anyone in the public regarding Vice Mayor
Worthington’s comments. I really don’t recall hearing from citizens in
Aripeka. We heard from a number of environmentalists who raised
important concerns and, quite frankly, the breaking point for me was the
bear issue which I was mixed on. Florida Fish & Wildlife very firmly
communicated to us that they believe the plan worked out with the
applicant was far more favorable than leaving it as is. I just want to relate
to the board that we looked at this very closely and again, it was a priority
for SWFWMD. The advantages outweighed the disadvantages when you
include the reclamation of the mining areas, which are pretty vast. They
are putting a lot of money and time into saving those, and along with the
change-out of the acres and the swap it clearly was something that we
needed to do.

Council Member Petersen: Are the wetlands on this site protected at present?
Ms. Ratliff: No, they are not.
Council Member Petersen: I concur with some of the comments about the wetlands and that we
should do whatever we can to save our wetlands. You stated there are
2,500 residential units and 250 hotel units planned and if you increase the
hotel units to 500 you will decrease the residential. My question has to do
with the bear. I was wondering if you could elaborate as to your plans for
the black bear and how you will enhance its habitat.

Ms. Ratliff: Florida Fish & Wildlife will have to tell us exactly what they will accept
and we have to sit down and work out those details. That hasn’t happened
yet. Before we can get final approval for the project we will have the final
details worked out.

Council Member Petersen: Then you will accept whatever the recommendations are from the Florida
Fish & Wildlife?
Ms. Ratliff: Yes. I don’t know that we have much choice the way the system works.
Ms. Todd: I was reading through the Florida Wildlife observations and I heard you
reference some of them. One was a concern about the development of a
spring delineation - Black Hole Spring and associated features in the
vicinity of the DRI? Is that being done?

Ms. Ratliff: We will have to do a detailed investigation as far as delineating
development.
Ms. Todd: Is that included in the recommendations?
Mr. Meyer: By reference it is included in our Final Report.
Ms. Todd: I’m not just concerned about wetlands, I am also concerned about the
creatures. You can’t just pick up a gopher tortoise and put it somewhere
and think it will thrive. Gopher holes usually attract other animals. In this particular recommendation there is a note that there should be some on-site conservation areas placed around. Do you know if this is being considered as well?

Mr. Meyer:
I am assuming that the answer will be included in the habitat management plan.

Ms. Todd:
I have the same concerns that Councilman Nurse brought up, but I also have to agree with what Mr. Pressman said. To get that much land is significant. It is very important to have that preserved. My last question to you has to do with the boats. Where is that going to be?

Ms. Ratliff:
As I mentioned before, those that want to utilize the channel, which by the way, is being improved as part of Pasco County’s park and whether this project moves forward or not that improvement will be done. We will be allowed to put 45 boats a day into that channel.

Vice Mayor Halpern:
The Fillman Bayou that is going to be used as the channel to the Gulf, is that currently used for boats?

Ms. Ratliff:
Yes it is.

Vice Mayor Halpern:
Yet it is going to need dredging?

Ms. Ratliff:
It does need improvements, yes.

Vice Mayor Halpern:
And this is a county project?

Ms. Ratliff:
The county has submitted a permit application and it is not a part of this DRI.

Vice Mayor Halpern:
I’m curious, how far off shore will they have to dredge to reach navigable water? That’s pretty shallow up in that area.

Mr. Carpenter:
The permit application that was put together by the county is to gain deep water access for their park. The county plan has less sea grass impact. The total impacts of sea grasses for the entire project is 5 acres. As far as the wetlands on the project, most of them are severely degraded because of the 50-75 years of mining. The water hydrology on this site has been messed up for decades.

Council Member Vale:
In the Final Report it says that you will have year round lower speed zones in the canal for the Manatee and I would like some clarification on that. If you are putting 45 boats a day in the canal and other boats are coming in and out, is it going to be a 12 month no wake zone? We go up to Crystal River and they (boaters) come flying in off the Gulf up that river and there have been some Manatee hits up there.

Mr. Carpenter:
There are Manatees in this area but they are not there in any significant numbers so it doesn’t get those special protections. Having said that, the county has developed a Manatee protection plan to protect that channel and we will do right by the Manatee.

Councilwoman Mullern:
Regarding the land swap - the two Sunwest areas that you are swapping, are those protected wetlands at this point?

Mr. Carpenter:
No. The two parcels that Sunwest is giving includes uplands as well as wetlands.

Mr. Conn, Legal Counsel:
I thought it might be helpful to talk about the process that has brought this report to the Council today. There have been several meetings, several sufficiency rounds of questions with the applicant being given the opportunity to respond. You have copies of the Fish & Wildlife Commission’s comments and SWFWMD’s comments. Out of that
process comes a desire and request for the applicant to make certain commitments. There has been a lot of discussion today about wetlands. On page 38 of the Final Report you will see some of the commitments that the applicant has made specifically with regard to wetlands. Not all of these commitments come from Council staff’s involvement, some are from other agencies. Those commitments include that the project will preserve all regionally significant natural resources identified, and that certain specific measures will be utilized to minimize impacts on wetlands. Those are applicant commitments. How those become relevant to the Council is that at the end of your report, under General Conditions, this report is recommending to Pasco County under General Condition #6 that any approval of the D. O. (Development Order) incorporate and include all of the developer commitments. If there is, on the part of Pasco County, any change to those developer commitments, then that justification must be set forth and will be further reviewed by this Council when the Development Order comes back for final review for consistency with your Final Report. I wanted to assure the Council that wetland considerations and impacts and the need to minimize wetland impacts were carefully reviewed by Council staff and what they have done in the report is to exact and set forth commitments that the developer has made and will be expected to honor and that Pasco County will be expected to review and incorporate in their final Development Order, which will come back again to the Council for final review.

Councilman Nurse: On the piece of land that SWFWMD is going to get, is there a discrepancy as to whether or not the SWFWMD land west of the lake - are we getting all the wetlands?

Mr. Carpenter: Yes. The actual boundary line was determined by SWFWMD.

Councilman Nurse: To staff, page 7 of the Final Report shows on the western border that most of the wetlands that would go are there. If you are agreeing on that western border that SWFWMD gets the wetlands then I’m comfortable. All the talk of bear has me wondering where they are living and my question is, who owns that large tract of undeveloped land just north of Aripeka Road?

Mr. Carpenter: It is owned by Pasco County and SWFWMD and you can walk directly from that location all the way up into Citrus County without ever stepping on privately owned land.

Councilman Roff: So the big strip in Pasco just to the North...

Mr. Carpenter: Pasco and SWFWMD own 210 acres. Once it gets to the Pasco/Hernando line it is SWFWMD land. South of that is a joint purchase.

Mayor Black: I would like to state, I know for a lot of us, this is an isolated area. It is an unsightly rock pit right now. This is a good use for the property in terms of reclamation. If our concern is wetlands, this deal is one of the best ways of preserving wetlands due to this exchange. If we want to preserve wetlands, this is a very good way of doing it. I do think adequate protections have been set for historical integrity of the community in Aripeka. I serve as co-chair of the County Historic Preservation Committee that is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and I’m comfortable with this.
Motion to adopt the Sunwest Harbourtowne Final Report and transmit to Pasco County and the Florida Department of Community Affairs. (Collins/Black).

6. Mr. Bob Clifford, Executive Director for the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) provided an update on the recently unveiled TBARTA Master Plan.

In the past 3 decades population has doubled, employment has tripled, nearly 50% of our developable land has been built out, and the delay in our commute time has more than doubled. By 2050 traffic congestion is expected to triple. Our transportation system is the foundation for our desired quality of life. What is the plan for the future, what is the vision, and what is the plan for the future for this region? We see TBARTA being a part of the One Bay Vision that the Regional Planning Council has been working on.

Traffic congestion does not start or stop at county lines. Neither should our solutions. Planning our transportation system on a regional level and speaking our one voice will increase our chances for securing funding. Our region’s ability to maintain and expand economic competitiveness is affected by the quality of our transportation connections. Our region competes with other cities for economic growth and jobs.

We work very closely with the TBRPC, Avera Wynne and his staff, using the REMI model to determine what are the economic side of this effort and how does that come into play? Also, what are we doing in terms of creating jobs? Not just for transportation, but also for jobs in the development that occurs around the transportation efforts. When gas is $4.00 a gallon people who live in Hernando, or Pasco, and have offices in Pinellas can’t afford to work there anymore. We need other options and alternatives. Congestion is going to continue to grow.

TBARTA’s purpose is to improve mobility and expand multimodal transportation options for passengers and freight throughout the seven-county region and has been charged with developing a feasible Master Plan before July 2009.

Questions explored in developing the Master Plan were:
  Where are you going to and from?
  Which routes make the best connections for regional travel?
  What is the best type of transportation improvement?
  How do we ensure consistency and help advance local efforts?

We need a balanced, multimodal system with short-distance bus, long-distance bus, managed lanes, short-distance rail, and long-distance rail. We identified regional destinations for population centers, employment centers, tourist destinations, clusters of special uses, areas ripe for re-development, and effects of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) have been studied.

The Preliminary Long-Term Vision would include:
  135 miles of short-distance rail
  115 miles of long-distance rail
  42 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT) in mixed traffic
  220 miles of managed lanes with express bus
  217 miles of other express bus

The Preliminary Mid-Term Vision could include:
103 miles short-distance rail
12 miles of BRT in exclusive lanes
42 miles of BRT in mixed traffic
159 miles of managed lanes with express bus
226 miles of other express bus

The cost of improving our infrastructure is high; but what is the cost of not improving it? Real dividends of transportation infrastructure are a boost to the economy. Each dollar invested means $5.84 in the economy, of which $4.79 stays in our region; and create an annual average of nearly 21,000 quality full-time jobs over 40 years.

Transit can be a tool to influence our region’s growth patterns. For more information on upcoming meetings please visit the TBARTA website: www.tbarta.com or you can follow TBARTA on Twitter: http://twitter.com/TBARTA

Mr. Clifford thanked Manny and staff for their assistance to TBARTA. Early on TBRPC loaned Don Conn for legal services and he has now become the general counsel for TBARTA. We really couldn’t have done this without the work and effort and support of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. We really appreciate it.

Of the top 30 metropolitan areas in the United States, we are the only one without public transit. Of the top 10 super regions in the United States, we are the only ones without rail. Of the top 15 super regions in the world, we are the only one without rail transit.

Questions & Comments:

Mr. Núñez: Recently the Sun Rail initiative, which is a couple of years ahead of ours, failed to come out of Tallahassee with funding approval. What is that going to do to our initiative in this region? Are we going to be competing against them? We have had good communication and cooperation between the two initiatives but now we will be going after the same money. What will that do to our initiative here? Do we still have to go back to Tallahassee after they finally get something done in Orlando, or can we go parallel?

Mr. Clifford: Yes, we will be competing for money. But we will be competing for money with everybody. Jacksonville is doing their thing, South Florida is doing there thing, and we aren’t alone. Our approach is to keep moving forward very methodically.

Ms. Todd: Realistically, are we planning to get the money? I’ve heard this discussion for over twenty some years about how this needs to happen. You are doing some wonderful planning. But realistically, besides educating the people and building awareness, how do you get to the point where you can get some money?

Mr. Clifford: We won’t get any money without local money. If we do not have the local funding we aren’t going to worry about federal, state, or private sector money—which is a big component of this. Once you are able to say you have the local money it is a lot easier to get other dollars. We will do well at the state and federal level, but we have to show them we are serious and have the money.

Ms. Todd: Would you envision TBARTA becoming the administrator with all participating counties that participate in the funding?

Mr. Clifford: Each county will have to make that determination. We are much stronger collectively than individually and we will begin that mix working with our partners in terms of local transit.

Power Point presentation(s) can be found at www.tbrpe.org/councilagendas/councilpresentations.htm
7. Council Members’ Comments
Chair Dodson recognized Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant, City of Palmetto.

8. Program Reports
A. Agency on Bay Management (ABM) – Chair, Mr. Robert Kersteen
There will be a full agency meeting on May 14th at 9:00 a.m. On the agenda will be:

Mr. Richard Meyers, Assistant Refuge Manager, who will present the Tampa Bay
National Wildlife Refuges Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental
Assessment, which applies to future management activities on the refuges within the
southern Tampa Bay area.

Dr. Randy Runnels, Manager of the Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves. He will present the
Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve Draft Management Plan, addressing the needs of the 22,000-
acre preserve in northwestern Manatee County.

Captain Gus Muench will describe the proposal to designate the shallow waters and the
adjacent uplands of western Hillsborough County from the Manatee County line to the
Little Manatee River as the UZITA HERITAGE PARK. He seeks ABM comment and
support.

ABM members Mr. Ronn Ginn, Architect and Vice Mayor Bob Worthington, City of
Gulfport; as well as Denis Frain, Harbormaster for Gulfport, will present a plan for
identifying MOORING FIELDS for recreational vessels in Pinellas County waters. ABM
support will be requested.

On June 11th, the Agency’s Natural Resources/Environmental Impact Review Committee
will meet. The agenda will be sent out on June 1st and a preview will be provided at the
June 8th Council meeting.

B. Clearinghouse Review Committee (CRC) - No Report
The next CRC meeting will be held on Monday, May 18th at 9:30 a.m.

C. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) – No Report

D. Emergency Management - No Report
Resolution #2009-2 has been prepared declaring the month of June as Hurricane
Awareness Month in the Tampa Bay region. Motion to adopt Resolution #2009-2 and
forward to the Governor’s office, the Department of Community Affairs, and the local
governments in the Tampa Bay region. (Black/Collins)

E. Legislative Committee – Vice Chair, Council Member Carlen Petersen
The Regional Planning Councils were funded in the amount of $2.5 million in the fiscal
year 2010 state budget.

Within the next few days the Council will provide a more detailed recap of the 2009
Legislative Session. A brief recap of SB360 was distributed. The bill:
Established automatic and optional transportation concurrency exception areas.
Development in dense urban land areas are exempt from the DRI review.
Makes it mandatory for local governments to participate in the dispute resolution process pursuant to the Statute 186.509.
Any local government may use the Alternate State Review Process to designate an urban service pursuant to the new definition.
DCA and FDOT are to complete a Mobility Fee Study by December 1, 2009 and establish a methodology for implementing a mobility fee to replace transportation concurrency.
The bill incorporates the provision of the affordable housing bill, SB1042, which was amended by the Senate on the last day of the session and agreed to by the House.

Staff has included a Legislative section on the Council website which includes updates and links to pertinent sites.

F. Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) – No Report

G. Economic Development – No Report

H. Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) – No Report

9. Other Council Reports - None

10. Executive/Budget Committee Report – Chair Dodson
The Committee met this morning prior to the Council meeting to go over the 2008/2009 Mid-Year Budget Amendment, which was approved earlier on the Council agenda.

The Committee also went through the proposed FY 2009/2010 Initial Budget. The Committee approved forwarding the proposed budget to the Council for your consideration at the June 8th monthly meeting.

11. Executive Director’s Report - None
Mr. Pumariega said he is trying to get the state economist to do a presentation to the Council at the June meeting and get the latest status of the economy and when they think it will turn around.
Last week the officers of the Council attended the Super Regional Conference in Orlando. We are starting to have a dialogue with the Orlando region to see how we can work together as a super region. We will be competing not only as a super region, but also as a mega-region which covers Jacksonville and South Florida. Those discussions are starting to take place. Not only do we have to advance our own region, but we have to be a part of a larger area in our state to compete.

For a recap of the Super Regional Conference and presentations, please visit: http://www.tampabay.org/subpage.asp?navid=7&id=186.

12. Chair’s Report
That was a well attended conference with over 400 attending. The speakers and participants on the panels were excellent.

Next meeting, June 8, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment: 11.38 a.m.