

MINUTES

**Levy County Planning Commission
October 22, 2007
EAR Workshop
6:30 p.m.**

The Levy County Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Thad Barber. Other members present were:

Thomas Harper
Ron Grant
Toni Collins

Also present was Planning Director, Shenley Neely and County Attorney, Anne Brown.

Chair Barber asked the Planning Department to present the items of business.

NEW BUSINESS: PLANNING DEPARTMENT – EAR WORKSHOP

Ms. Shenley Neely explained that the purpose of the workshop was to review the proposed Springs Protection Element, Future Land Use Map series and the Capital Improvements Element. Ms. Neely explained that during the EAR process that there were no recommended amendments to the Capital Improvements Element and that staff provided the Board with a copy of the Element for any comments/concerns that the Board may have.

Ms. Neely explained that staff has made minor changes to the Municipal Service District (MSD) Map boundaries for the Town of Bronson and City of Williston due to those municipalities annexing properties into the city limits outside of the MSD boundary. Ms. Neely explained that there was not a need to change any of the other MSD maps.

Ms. Neely explained to the Board that there was representatives from several different state agencies present at the meeting to answer any questions the Board may have regarding the proposed Springs Protection Element. Ms. Neely introduced Mr. Richard Deadman from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Mr. Tom Greenhalgh from Florida Geological Survey / Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Mr. Paul Booher from the Department of Health.

Mr. Richard Deadman from DCA introduced Mr. Paul Booher from the Department of Health and Mr. Tom Greenhalgh from the Florida Geological Survey / DEP and explained that they would be presenting a brief overview and explaining the best management practices for springs protection. Mr. Deadman explained that the overview would focus on the vulnerability of the County and the water quality problems that the County will be facing. Mr. Deadman stated that they wanted to be able to present as much supportive data as possible to the Board during the EAR review process. Mr. Deadman explained that Wakulla County implemented policies to protect seventy percent of the County and that Marion County has created a map showing ten year and one hundred year travel time to the springs.

Mr. Tom Greenhalgh showed the Board a power point presentation and explained to the Board what the Florida Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (FAVA) was and that Levy County was mostly included within this area. Mr. Greenhalgh stated that the Florida Geological Survey defines Springsheds as “those areas within the ground and surface water basins that contribute to the discharge of the springs”.

Mr. Greenhalgh further explained that on a state wide level Levy County is extremely vulnerable to groundwater contamination across the entire county. Mr. Greenhalgh explained that Fanning Springs has the highest nitrate levels of first magnitude springs within the State of Florida. He explained that Wekiva Springs is considered a second magnitude spring and that not all of Levy County's Springsheds have been delineated. Mr. Greenhalgh reiterated that the springs within Levy County are already being impacted.

Mr. Richard Deadman showed the Board a power point presentation and explained to the Board the recommendations that have been given by various state agencies. The recommendations are that the County establish springs protection standards, nitrogen removal septic systems, when possible have property owners connect to central water and sewer systems, the septic systems have a maintenance / inspection program and that when regular systems fail that property owners replace the existing systems with performance based systems. Mr. Deadman stated that the County could create buffers around karst features, establish open space ratios and clustering of development. Mr. Deadman stated that the recommendations that are being given are considered Best Management Practices (BMP's) that the County can use to mitigate and reduce to the greatest extent possible the impact on the natural systems. Mr. Deadman stated that the State is expecting the county to address springs protection within the EAR process. Mr. Deadman stated that there may be funding available for technical assistance for the counties to hire a consultant.

Mr. Paul Booher explained the differences between the Aerobic Treatment Units (ATU) and the Performance Based Systems. Mr. Booher explained that the ATU's are inspected once a year and the Performance Based Systems are inspected twice a year. Mr. Booher stated that setting the policies are the easy part and that the implementation of the policies is more difficult to monitor.

Annette Long explained that funding is not available to delineate the ten year to 100 year travel time of the springs.

Emily Casey expressed a concern that the whole County should be included within the springs protection zone.

ISSUES OF CONCERN:

Mr. Harper asked whether having the septic systems pumped out on an annual basis would help alleviate the problem. Mr. Paul Booher explained that there needs to be a balance maintained between the system being completely empty and being full for the system to operate properly. Mr. Harper stated that there are good recommendations within the document for springs protection, however, how does the County implement those recommendations. Ms. Collins asked whether the inspection program for the systems would be funded through the state to help alleviate the additional staff that will be needed to implement the program. Mr. Booher explained that the health department is a fee based operation and that it is possible for in the future that the department will increase the number of inspectors. Mr. Barber stated that high nitrate levels are also due to the fertilizers that the farmers and foresters are using. Ms. Anne Brown asked Mr. Richard Deadman how the County can set a protection zone map and apply it when the state is saying that the zone changes. Ms. Brown stated that portions of the proposed element read like the land development regulations (LDR) and that in order for her to defend the proposed element that those portions should be the LDR's rather than in the comprehensive plan. Mr. Deadman explained that the map can be made to include the closest section line within the springs protection zone. Mr. Deadman stated that he would set up a conference with people at DCA to decide if the standards that were suggested should go in the comprehensive plan or the LDR's.

Ms. Neely explained that the County has a time frame for updating the comprehensive plan through the EAR process. Ms. Neely asked Mr. Deadman to provide the County with a springs protection zone

map that delineates the springs are including the section/township/range as a guide for the designated zone so that it can be included within the element. Ms. Brown asked Mr. Deadman that the State also provide the data & analysis to support it the springs protection zone map.

The Board asked about the status of the Large Scale Amendment package that was sent to DCA. Ms. Neely explained that the applicants are in the process of responding to DCA's comments/concerns by providing data and analysis and determining whether they will proceed to the adoption phase. Ms. Neely further explained that based on the applicant's responses that she will then update the staff report and present the information to the Board of County Commissioners.

There being no further business for the Levy County Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Chairman