

**RESTORE ACT
Public Meeting of May 17, 2016**

Attendees: Chris Cowart, School Board Representative, Chairman
John Meeks, Board of County Commissioners, Vice-Chairman
David Pieklik, Economic Development Representative
Leslie Sturmer, Aquaculture
Jolie Davis, Citizen Representative
Richard Streeter, Citizen Representative

Absent: Rayanne Giddis, Higher Education
Gail Gold, Tourism Industry Representative
Jack Schofield, Citizen Representative

Chairman Cowart opened the Committee meeting of the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee at 3:02 p.m. at the Levy County Court House. Chairman Cowart said the prayer followed by the Pledge to the Flag. The roll of members was called.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public had no comment at this time.

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Chairman Cowart advised that Ms. Gail Gold had been appointed to the Committee as Tourism Industry Representative by the Board of County Commissioners on May 3, 2016.

Ms. Tisha Whitehurst explained that Ms. Gold had an unexpected obligation arise and would not be in attendance.

RESTORE ACT UPDATE

Ms. Whitehurst explained the County procurement policy has weaknesses and adjustments are being drafted for consideration by the Board. Ms. Whitehurst said the County may delay on the award of funds scheduled for June 1 until the procurement issues are fixed.

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

OYSTER REEF RESTORATION - Mark Barrigan representing Cedar Key Oystermen's Association: Mr. Barrigan presented a power point on developing a sustainable oyster fishery on the coast. Mr. Barrigan explained oyster reefs near shore have been depleted and lost structural integrity. Mr. Barrigan explained methods of restoring oyster reefs and their life cycle. Mr. Barrigan said the project is requesting \$50,000 per year for eight years. Mr. Barrigan said the reef restoration would be under the control of the Cedar Key Oystermen's Association and would focus on the replacement of substrate materials. Mr. Barrigan said oyster seed reared in a hatchery would be used for the oyster population and would be a long term sustainable ecology of the near shore areas of Cedar Key. Mr.

Barrigan said it would represent a sustainable income.

Ms. Leslie Sturmer explained there is long term funding for Apalachicola but none of these funds reach Levy County.

DEVELOPING WATER AMBASSADORS - Carol Jones: Ms. Carol Jones with the Levy County School Board explained they had reached out for other partners and have met with the Friends of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve, the Marine Science Lab in Cedar Key and have been able to adjust some of their requests while working with a common factor to educate the youth on natural water resources. Ms. Jones said it would be a four year project with the majority of the funds need for year one and two. Ms. Jones said they were recently able to purchase a water quality sensor with a grant from Suncoast School. Ms. Jones said the project has been revised and \$35,000 per year would allow for equipment, faculty and providing supplies to students. Ms. Jones explained their proposed costs have been reduced by half through partnerships with other entities. Ms. Jones said they currently have \$8,000 invested in three trips that are being made.

CLAM TRAIL IN CEDAR KEY AND SURROUNDING AREA - Leslie Sturmer: Ms. Sturmer said this is a joint project with the Cedar Key Aquaculture Association to be able to learn about the heritage and ecology of shellfish. Ms. Sturmer said the project has been revised to ten fiberglass clams instead of the 18 in the original project. Ms. Sturmer said some funding for construction would be in-kind. Ms. Sturmer explained the project would begin with the construction of the clams and four being installed in the Cedar Key area the first year and four more installed in the Cedar Key area the second year with the remaining two clams being installed off of the island. Ms. Sturmer said the project has been modified to request \$53,500 for funding of the ten clams, preparing a web page and inserts for the shellfish trail map.

CEDAR KEY AQUARIUM AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER - Doug Maples and Mindy Allen: Mr. Maples said the original project request was for 1.2 million dollars but the original project is no longer feasible. Mr. Maples said with the revision of the project they are looking at partnering with the University of Florida. Ms. Mindy Allen, Coordinator of the Biological Station in Cedar key is with the University of Florida explained that with the purchase of the Gulfside Motel in 2013 the University will be using this for access to Seahorse Key. Ms. Allen said students from Santa Fe College and the University of Florida will be using the facility. Ms. Allen provided a power point of the proposed plans for the Biological Station and the request has been revised for funding for a 512 square feet aquarium and two touch tanks. Ms. Allen said the total request would be \$300,000 with \$80,000 needed to complete the aquarium and using remaining funds to complete classrooms.

CEDAR KEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ENHANCEMENT - Bill Heckler: Mr. Heckler explained the original project applications entailed two projects. Mr. Heckler said the project to purchase their own property has been withdrawn and the Chamber is working well with the City of Cedar Key in housing the Chamber at a convenient location. Mr. Heckler said the revised project application is \$15,000 for five years which will allow for the staffing of the office to be open seven days a week. The original project application called for \$45,000 per year for five years which would have paid salaries and overhead.

WITHLACOOCHEE GULF AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROJECTS (1) INFORMATION KIOSK; (2) INGLIS/YANKEETOWN MEDIA PACKAGE - Laurie Wynn: Ms. Wynn said the project application for an outdoor kiosk which would be placed in front of the Chamber of Commerce for the promotion of eco-tourism. Ms. Wynn said a compact has been established to partner with Inglis, Yankeetown, Dunnellon, Levy, Citrus and Marion counties to attract visitors with outside interests to the area. Ms. Wynn said a total of \$34,175 is being requested which would allow for the purchase of the kiosk, software, hard-wiring the kiosk to the Chamber's building and providing for a video surveillance camera and lighting, including an overhang to protect the kiosk. Dr. Richard Streeter explained the original project was for a solar powered kiosk and there would have been a continuous cost for the software.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meetings of the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee will be Tuesday July 19, 2016 and Tuesday, August 16, 2016, commencing at 3:00 p.m. in the Board of County Commissioner's meeting room at the Levy County Court House.

Ms. Sturmer requested a spreadsheet reflecting the number of years funding is requested and the project placement on the criteria previously established for ranking the projects.

Ms. Davis suggested reviewing the criteria to make it more user-friendly and clarifying what each criteria means. Ms. Davis said a better understanding is needed of the criteria since education is not part of the criteria currently used.

Ms. Whitehurst is to contact Pasco and Bay counties to discuss the criteria they are using to rank their projects.

The consensus of the Committee was for Ms. Whitehurst to provide a synopsis of the project and the guidelines it was selected and ranked.

GULF CONSORTIUM UPDATE

Comm. John Meeks said the formula for the Pot 3 funds did not split by watersheds and it has led to a change in the state expenditure plan and each county will have their plan with the same guidelines as the Pot 1 funding. Comm. Meeks said the larger counties are not particularly pleased with the division of the funds.

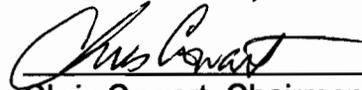
PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dan Hilliard said that W.A.R., Inc. will have additional information in June or July on and additional funding they may be receiving.

MINUTES

Ms. Davis moved to approve the minutes of April 19, 2016, seconded by Comm. John Meeks and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

**RESTORE ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
LEVY COUNTY, FLORIDA**



Chris Cowart, Chairman