

**RESTORE ACT
Public Meeting of January 17, 2017**

Attendees: Chris Cowart, School Board Representative, Chairman
John Meeks, Board of County Commissioners, Vice-Chairman
Leslie Sturmer, Aquaculture
Rayanne Giddis, Higher Education
Jolie Davis, Citizen Representative
Jack Schofield, Citizen Representative
Richard Streeter, Citizen Representative

Absent: Tourism Industry Representative - Vacant
David Pieklik, Economic Development Representative

Chairman Cowart opened the Committee meeting of the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee at 3:00 p.m. at the Levy County Court House. Chairman Cowart gave the prayer followed by the Pledge to the Flag. The roll of members was called.

Chairman Cowart called for nominations for Chair and Vice-chair. Comm. John Meeks moved to retain Chris Cowart as Chair and John Meeks and Vice-chair, seconded by Jolie Davis and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public had no comments.

RESTORE ACT UPDATE

Ms. Whitehurst said Mr. Dennis Voyles of Voyles Guide Service has agreed to represent the Tourism Industry seat on the Committee. Chairman Cowart said Mr. Voyles had been an educator in Bronson and Trenton as a agriculture and science teacher. Comm. J. Meeks moved to recommend Dennis Voyles to the Board of County Commissioners for the Tourism Industry seat, seconded by Dr. Rayanne Giddis and the motion carried.

Ms. Whitehurst said the Board of County Commissioners had passed the procurement ordinance on December 7, 2016 and we have now met the last item in the track document. Ms. Whitehurst explained we are now waiting for our special award which will not be completed until after the inauguration. Ms. Whitehurst said once the special award is removed she can notify Tetra Tech to being working on the multi-year plan.

Ms. Whitehurst explained she had received inquiries from Mr. John McPherson, Cedar Key Sewer and Water and Ms. Mindy Allen, the Cedar Key Aquarium concerning pre-award of funding. Ms. Whitehurst said she sent their projects to Mr. John Stutz of Treasury to review as any pre-award of Pot 1 funds would place the entire financial burden on the County if they did not meet Treasury requirements.

Ms. Sturmer said the Cedar Key Sewer and Water improvement project needed the pre-award as they are using the RESTORE Pot 1 funds as a 50% match with a Suwannee River Water Management grant. Ms. Sturmer said the request by Ms. Allen also meant they would lose the match on a grant for the Cedar Key Aquarium.

Chairman Cowart explained that Mr. McPherson of the Cedar Key Sewer and Water was requesting \$86,000 and Ms. Allen for the Cedar Key Aquarium was requesting \$300,000 and the rules stated repeatedly that it was at the County's own risk to pre-award those sums.

Ms. Whitehurst explained that was the reason for sending the projects to Treasury for pre-approval and review for questions.

Dr. Richard Streeter said a definitive response from Treasury would be needed and from his experience pre-award costs were almost always denied. Dr. Streeter said something in writing from Treasury would be needed.

Ms. Sturmer commented that the TransOcean funds had already been received. Ms. Whitehurst said this is a pre-award according to Treasury and the projects have to be vetted to be funded and Treasury could say they are not going to fund the projects so it was better to have Treasury do a thorough review than find out a piece of the project would not be funded.

Ms. Whitehurst said Mr. Stutz is going to do some training in Dixie County and if he can secure an extra day of travel he would meet with the project managers and Ms. Whitehurst to review these projects.

Ms. Whitehurst said she had been invited and attended a meeting in Citrus County to discuss a possible regional project for Pot 3 funds. Ms. Whitehurst said Citrus County was interested in partnering on a boat ramp project at the Cross Florida Barge Canal and a force main. Ms. Whitehurst said the force main project would come as far as the gas plant in Citrus County. Ms. Whitehurst said there was a lot of public comment at the meeting with Citrus County. Commissioner Kitchen was not in favor of the force main project and thought the barge canal boat ramp area would be a good regional project.

Comm. J. Meeks did not see the force main as a regional project if it did not come all the way to the county line. Comm. Meeks said the boat ramp would alleviate some of the stress on parking but would not be beneficial to those businesses on CR 40. Comm. J. Meeks said he had discussed the force main with Citrus County Comm. Carnahan prior to his appointment to the Gulf Consortium discussing Citrus County's committing to bringing the force main all the way to the county line.

Mr. Schofield inquired if anyone from the Withlacoochee Basin Economic Development Compact was in attendance at the meeting with Citrus County. Ms. Whitehurst replied she was the only representative from Levy County and her email invitation did not have any other parties shown.

Mr. Schofield said the mayor of Inglis would be asking the legislative delegation to provide assistance to provide a sewer system in the Inglis area. Chairman Cowart said House Speaker Corcoran is requiring a bill be filed the first day of session for any appropriations and if there is not a corresponding Senate bill it will not be heard in the House.

After further discussion, it was decided by consensus that there had not been

enough information provided by Citrus County on the projects to make a decision. Comm. J. Meeks said would have to have additional information and it would not be very prudent to handle the Pot 3 funds in the manner that Pot 1 projects are being considered. Comm. J. Meeks said water quality is a big need and for most counties the septic to sewer would alleviate some major problems with the water quality.,

Chairman Cowart asked Ms. Whitehurst if there had been any more information provided concerning a bond issue for projects. Ms. Whitehurst responded that there is no clear response in the FAQ's and no rules have been prepared. Ms. Whitehurst said she will attempt to obtain more information from Citrus County. Comm. J. Meeks moved to seek more information about the sewer project suggested by Citrus County, seconded by Dr. Streeter and the motion carried.

PROJECT

Ms. Mindy Allen, Cedar Key Aquarium project explained their request for a pre-award of the \$300,000 was because the construction project is slated to be completed by September, 2017 and without the pre-award of \$300,000 by May, 2017 they will not be able to complete the 3rd floor and there will be a 25% to 35% increase in building costs if there is a delay in completing this project in the scheduled time frame. Ms. Allen said they had prepared a packet for Treasury which included letters of support from the City of Cedar Key, the contractor and the Florida Aquarium.

GULF CONSORTIUM UPDATE

Comm. J. Meeks said the bonding issue is still being discussed by the Gulf Consortium. Comm. Meeks said the Consortium discussed various projects and had presentations on some of the projects but the central theme was water quality more than any other issue. Comm. Meeks said a lot of the coastal counties still have dwellings on septic systems and other counties are looking at cleaning up the Gulf basins. Comm. Meeks said Pensacola has committed all of their funding for cleaning up the basin. Comm. Meeks said ESA will have to work all of the different projects into the state-wide expenditure plan. Comm. Meeks said in the next 2-4 months a decision will need to be made on the project from ecosystem restoration with artificial reefs, cleaning up damaged shoreline restoration, or mitigating sources for water quality. Comm. Meeks said you don't want to be the county that delays the process and the County could consider the septic tanks along the Suwannee River conversion to sewer systems or mitigate water runoff.

Ms. Whitehurst said Pot 3 will require a region on the map where the County will focus any projects and ESA will start input into the state plan.

Comm. Meeks said a direction on what project to concentrate on should be made at the next meeting and there should be one large project and not 10 different projects. Comm. Meeks explained even with the state expenditure plan approved the individual project will also have to be approved.

Ms. Whitehurst explained that ESA had prepared a brief recap and the Pot 3 funds were not intended to fill holes in departmental budgets or to fund ongoing programic functions, it was intended for extraordinary projects that address both local and regional

coastal priorities and fewer projects are definitely preferred on numerous small projects.

Mr. Schofield said the south end of the County is seeking to secure sewer and water and 12 million dollars would strongly address the sewer system. Mr. Schofield said the southern portion of the County is expecting growth. Mr. Schofield said the mayor from the Town of Inglis will be making a request to the legislative delegation.

Comm. Meeks said he was again going to address placing the County in one water management district with the legislative delegation.

Ms. Davis said the City of Cedar Key has established an ordinance that no longer allows individual septic systems within the city limits and this has helped water quality.

Dr. Streeter said there are numerous places in the Town of Yankeetown but there is no place to put a sewer system and there are larger projects that can not proceed with out central sewer being available. Dr. Streeter said the cost of individual package plants is cost prohibitive and also there is a lack of space to place them.

Ms. Sturmer said with the action the City of Cedar Key it helped to expand the waste water plant and the Cedar Key Sewer and Water Association is spending time securing grants to upgrade and this is also an opportunity also.

Comm. Meeks said the money could be used a leverage and partner with other government entities such as water management districts, Rural Business Development, USDA, etc. Comm. Meeks said there is a responsibility to the unincorporated areas such as Fowlers Bluff, Camp Azalea and Peaceful Acres with septic systems and they don't have a local municipal government for support. Comm. Meeks said anything that is done would require mandatory hookups which going back to the wastewater main project with Citrus County would eliminate the need for a treatment facility.

Dr. Streeter said there has always been a problem with Citrus County not wanting to go to the river but if Duke Energy would become involved with the plant that is planned for Levy County it might assist in expanding that need for the wastewater capabilities.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meetings of the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee will be Tuesday, February 21, 2017, commencing at 3:00 p.m. in the Board of County Commissioner's meeting room at the Levy County Court House.

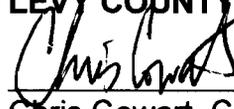
PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dan Hilliard, W.A.R., Inc. said the benefit goes back to water quality, economic benefit and waste water infrastructure would add value to property. Mr. Hilliard said the Town of Inglis is a small area and can't get any development and the RESTORE Act goes to restoring economic issues.

MINUTES

Comm. John Meeks moved to approve the minutes of November 15, 2016, seconded by Mr. Jack Schofield and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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



Chris Cowart, Chairman