



Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Agenda

February 11, 2015

DeSoto County Commission Chambers

201 East Oak Street

Arcadia, FL 34266

9:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Buddy Mansfield

- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- New Member Oath-of-Office
- Roll Call
- Announcements

AGENDA ITEM #1 PUBLIC COMMENTS

AGENDA ITEM #2 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

- A. December 10, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes
- B. January Financial Report

- Action Recommended: Approval
- Exhibit #2: A. Minutes – Pg 1
B. Financial Report *will be distributed at the meeting.*

AGENDA ITEM #3 REPORT FROM DESOTO COUNTY

County Administrator Mandy Hines will update the Council on economic and transportation projects in DeSoto County.

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit: None

DeSoto Hardee Highlands Okeechobee & Polk Counties

AGENDFA ITEM #4 TRANSPORTATION ACTIVITIES

Staff will update the Council on the following transportation activities:

- A. Update on Transit Grants
- B. Status of Transportation Disadvantaged Request for Proposals (RFP)
- C. Status of the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) formation
- D. Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) and Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit: None

AGENDA ITEM #5 AUTHORIZE COPY MACHINE REQUEST FOR BIDS

The lease on the office copy machines, with Ricoh USA, is set to expire on May 11, 2015. Staff is seeking authorization to begin the process of soliciting bids for multi-function copy machine(s), lease and maintenance services.

- Action Recommended: Authorization to begin the Request for Bids process
- Exhibit #5: Copying and Printing Usage Fact Sheet – Pg 10

AGENDA ITEM #6 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Staff will provide an overview of economic conditions and forecasts for the State, and review the regional economic indicators.

- A. Statewide Economic Overview
- B. Central Florida Economic Development District Overview

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit: None

AGENDA ITEM #7 APPOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2015

Chairman Buddy Mansfield will appoint members to serve on the Council's Executive Committee.

- Action Recommended: Approve Executive Committee
- Exhibit: None

AGENDA ITEM #8 GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE PRESENTATION BY NORMAN WHITE, COUNCIL ATTORNEY

Norman White will discuss Government in the Sunshine rules and regulations, that govern Council Members and their communications.

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit #8: Sunshine Law Rules and Regulations Information Sheet – Pg 11

AGENDA ITEM #9 DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT (DRI) MEMBER ORIENTATION

Norman White will instruct the Council Members regarding procedures and their role in the upcoming DRI Public Hearing. Pat Steed will discuss the staff report which will be prepared for the DRI and provide basic details of the process.

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit: None

AGENDA ITEM #10 REPORT ON FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (FRCA) JANUARY MEETING

The Executive Director and Policy Board members will report on the FRCA meeting held in January in Tallahassee. Members attending the FRCA meeting were Chairman Buddy Mansfield, FRCA President and Policy Board Member Pat Huff, and Jackie Tucker.

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit #10: Monthly Activity Report – Pg 14

AGENDA ITEM #11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director will report on current work activities.

- A. Legislative Update
- B. Grants Update

- Action Recommended: Information Only
- Exhibit: None

AGENDA ITEM #12 OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Set date, time, and location for next meeting: April 8, 2015, 9:30 a.m. in Winter Haven.
- B. Other Business

ADJOURN

Please be advised that if you desire to appeal any decisions made as a result of the above hearing or meeting, you will need a record of the proceedings and in some cases a verbatim record is required. You must make your own arrangements to produce this record (Florida Statute 286.0105). The Central Florida Regional Planning Council conducts business in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination laws. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, familial, or income status. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact Patricia M. Steed, Executive Director, 555 E. Church Street, Bartow, FL 863-534-7130 x 130 within two working days of receipt of this notification." If hearing impaired call: (TDD) 1-800-955-8771 or voice impaired call: 1-800-955-8770 via Florida Relay Service.



Central Florida Regional Planning Council

December 10, 2014

**Bartow Public Library
2nd Floor Conference Room
2150 South Broadway Avenue
Bartow, FL 33830
9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Chairman Pat Huff called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Clayton Williams led the Council in prayer. The Council Pledged Allegiance to the Flag. Roll was called and the following members were present.

CFRPC Chairman, Mayor, Pat Huff, Ridge League of Cities, City of Bartow
CFRPC Vice-Chairman, Councilman Clayton Williams, City of Okeechobee
Commissioner Buddy Mansfield, DeSoto County
Jackie Tucker, DeSoto County Gubernatorial Appointee
City Councilwoman Neda Cobb, Wauchula
Bryant Culpepper, Okeechobee County Commissioner
Commissioner Melony Bell, Polk County
City Commissioner Edie Yates, Lakeland
City Commissioner J.P. Powell, Winter Haven
Tom Deardorff, Polk County Director of Growth Management, Ex-officio
Laura Lockwood, representing Jennifer Stults, Florida Department of Transportation, Ex-officio

Members absent:

City Councilman Robert Heine, Arcadia
Commissioner Sue Birge, Hardee County
Chet Huddleston, Hardee County Gubernatorial Appointee
City Councilman Bud Whitlock, Sebring
Commissioner Ron Handley, Highlands County
Mark Hill, Highlands County Development Services Director, Ex-officio
Dr. Marshall Goodman, Polk County Gubernatorial Appointee
Tom Cookingham, DeSoto County Planning Director, Ex-officio
Bill Royce, Okeechobee County Planning Director, Ex-officio
Gina Reynolds, Florida's Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative, Ex-officio
Jim Golden, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Ex-officio
Mary Yeorgan, Florida Department of Environmental Protection



Announcements

Chairman Pat Huff presented Okeechobee City Commissioner Clayton Williams with a framed Certificate of Appreciation for the time he served as Council member and Vice Chairman of the Council.

Commissioner Williams thanked the Council and staff. He served on the Council since 2003 and stated that he has enjoyed serving and will miss fellow Council members and staff.

Pat Steed thanked Commissioner Williams for his wisdom and graciousness throughout his tenure on the Council. The Council wished him well in his retirement.

Pat Steed stated that staff prepared homemade treats for the Council, as they do each December, to thank the Council members for their service, and to wish them a Merry Christmas. She recognized those staff members who were in attendance.

ADDITION OF NEW AGENDA ITEM

Chairman Huff stated that an agenda item needed to be added. Resolution Number 2014-12G, authorizing a Joint Participation Agreement (JPA) with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and was added to Agenda Item #5. The exhibit for that additional Agenda Item was distributed to each Council member.

AGENDA ITEM #1 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Huff opened the public comment period. The public comment period closed with no comments.

AGENDA ITEM #2 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

A. October 8, 2014, Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman Huff asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the October 8, 2014, Council Meeting Minutes.

MOTION

There being none, Melony Bell moved to approve the Council Meeting Minutes as submitted. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. November, 2014 Financial Report

Kristen Guy, Finance Director, reviewed the Statement of Net Assets and Statement of Activities for the month ended November 30, 2014. Discussion followed.

MOTION

Jackie Tucker moved to approve the November 2014 Financial Report as presented. Melony Bell seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #3 FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) AND FLORIDA'S TURNPIKE ENTERPRISE TENTATIVE FIVE YEAR WORK PROGRAM PUBLIC HEARING

Laura Lockwood, Community Liaison Administrator for FDOT District One, opened the public hearing at approximately 9:45 a.m. Introducing FDOT staff accompanying her, Ms. Lockwood conducted a public hearing addressing FDOT's Tentative Five Year Work Program for FY 2015/16 – 2019/20, followed by a public comment period. This public hearing was conducted pursuant to Section 339.135(4)(c), F.S. and included a video presentation. The public was invited to review the FDOT and Turnpike District's Tentative Five Year Work Program and to provide comments. One citizen, Joanna Drinkwater from DeSoto County, addressed the FDOT during the public hearing. The public hearing closed at approximately 10:15 a.m. FDOT staff was available prior to and immediately following the presentation for questions, informal discussion and assisting the public.

AGENDA ITEM #4 PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) SECTION 5311 CAPITAL GRANT AND JOINT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT FOR HEARTLAND RURAL MOBILITY PROGRAM

Pat Steed reported that since the last Council Meeting, the Governor has officially designated the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO). Staff has been working with Highlands County and DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry and Okeechobee Counties, as well as Sebring and Avon Park.

A. Heartland Rural Mobility Management Program Review and Resolution 2014-12A

Sherry Carver, Mobility Coordinator, stated that this public hearing was properly advertised and staff was prepared to conduct the hearing, however, no requests were received to hold a public hearing.

Ms. Carver presented a PowerPoint presentation showing the efforts being made to enhance mobility in the Heartland through the Heartland Rural Mobility Plan. She presented specific Mobility Management Program information for each of the individual counties in the region.

Ms. Carver stated that staff had prepared an FTA Section 5311 Capital Funds grant application for FY 2015-16, which will continue funding the Mobility Management Program. She requested the Council adopt Resolution 2014-12A, which gives the Executive Director the authority to submit the application and administer the grant.

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12A as presented. Melony Bell seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Authorize Joint Participation Agreement (JPA) and Resolution 2014-12B

Sherry Carver stated that staff submitted an application to FDOT for FTA Section 5311 Capital Funds earlier in the year. FDOT is requiring a Resolution authorizing the Executive Director to sign a JPA to receive these funds. She requested the Council adopt Resolution 2014-12B, which gives the Executive Director authority to sign the JPA and to receive these funds.

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12B as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #5 TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND GRANTS

Showing a PowerPoint presentation, Marcia Staszko, Transportation Disadvantaged Program Director, explained the Council's role in the statewide Transportation Disadvantaged Program. She showed current TD Program statistics and the role the Council has in the three county area of Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee. Ms. Staszko presented grant applications and asked the Council to adopt resolutions associated with each of the grants.

A. Resolution 2014-12C, FTA 5311 Operating Grant

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12C as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution 2014-12D, FTA 5310 Operating Grant

MOTION

Jackie Tucker moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12D as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution 2014-12E, State Transit Discretionary Program

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12E as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Resolution 2014-12F, FTA 5307 Grants

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12F as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADDITION TO AGENDA ITEM #5

Pat Steed presented a chart showing the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Programs Administered by the Council, and how the newly designated Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) would affect the public transportation programs in Highlands County.

Ms. Steed stated that funds are available to develop a Long Range Transportation Plan for the six counties of the HRTPO Area. She asked the Council to adopt Resolution 2014-12G, which would authorize a Joint Participation Agreement (JPA) with FDOT.

E. Resolution 2014-12G, Authorizing JPA with FDOT

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to adopt Resolution 2014-12G as presented. Jackie Tucker seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #6 FY 2015 TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (CTC) FOR HARDEE, HIGHLANDS AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTIES

Marcia Staszko stated that every five years, the Council goes through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select a Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) to provide transportation coordination for the three county area. She reviewed the schedule of activities to complete the RFP process. A copy of the RFP was included in the Council's meeting materials. Discussion followed.

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to approve the RFP process and schedule of activities as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #7 FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) PRESENTATION ON FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

Keith Robins, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One Freight Coordinator, described the Freight Coordinator job responsibilities. There is a Freight Coordinator in all the FDOT districts and it is a newly created position. He provided an overview presentation of key freight issues currently in FDOTs Work Plan. Discussion followed.

AGENDA ITEM #8 AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

Mike Carter and Trisha Floyd, with CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, Certified Public Accountants, presented a PowerPoint presentation overview of the Council's Annual Audit for FY 2013-2014. The Council was given an Unqualified Opinion and no reportable items or audit adjustments were noted. Mr. Carter presented a six year history of revenues and expenditures and noted trends in each category. Mr. Carter noted that last year the CFRPC received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement which is a major accomplishment for a small organization.

Trisha Floyd reviewed the report regarding Internal Control over Financial Reporting, the Independent Auditors Report on Compliance, and the Management Letter. She stated that there were no findings in any of the reviews. Discussion followed.

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to accept the FY 2013-14 Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #9 UPDATE TO COUNCIL POLICIES

Pat Steed presented a Title VI Nondiscrimination Program Policy Statement to add to the Council's Personnel Policies and Procedures. She explained the need for the Policy Statement and asked for its approval.

MOTION

Jackie Tucker moved to approve the Title VI Nondiscrimination Program Policy Statement and accompanying procedure as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Steed referred to the existing "Sexual Harassment" Policy in the Council's Personnel Policies and Procedures. She requested approval to remove the existing policy and replace it with a harassment policy which would be in compliance with current standards.

MOTION

J.P. Powell moved to authorize the removal of the existing policy and replace it with the policy language as presented. Edie Yates seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #10 ELECTION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS FOR 2014

Clayton Williams, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, stated that the Nominating Committee met at 9:00 a.m. just prior to this Council meeting, to consider candidates for offices of the Council for 2015. He stated that the Committee nominated Buddy Mansfield as Chairman for 2015, and Edie Yates to serve as Vice-Chairman.

MOTION

There being no other nominations, J.P. Powell moved to elect the slate of officers for 2015 as nominated. Bryant Culpepper seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #11 APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (FRCA) POLICY BOARD

Chairman Elect Buddy Mansfield asked Jackie Tucker and Pat Huff to continue serving, along with himself, on the FRCA Policy Board for 2015. They both agreed.

AGENDA ITEM #12 APPOINT MEMBERS TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Chairman Elect Buddy Mansfield asked Edie Yates, Neda Cobb and Bryant Culpepper to serve as the Council's Finance Committee for 2015.

Commissioner Culpepper respectfully declined, saying he was currently filling Commission Ray Domer's vacant position on the Council, and he would rather wait until the Governor appoints someone to fill his seat.

The third member will be appointed at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Florida Regional Councils Association

Pat Steed distributed a copy of the 2013-14 Florida Regional Councils Association Annual Report and Directory to each member, and pointed out the "President's Message", on the inside cover, which was from the Council Chairman Pat Huff, who is the current President of FRCA. She referred to a chart showing all the programs in which each RPC in Florida is involved. She pointed out that the CFRPC was involved in a many of the programs and activities.

B. Staff Activities

Ms. Steed stated that she planned for Helen Sears, Program Director, to attend this meeting before her retirement to Minnesota, which occurred sooner than expected. Staff held a retirement party where she was presented with a commemorative clock presented to her by Chairman Pat Huff. The party was attended by her friends and colleagues who came to say goodbye.

Ms. Steed reported that Sherry Carver, Mobility Manager, made a presentation at the National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference regarding Small Urban and Rural Transportation. She stated that they frequently referenced the CFRPC as an example of a regional agency engaging in support of transportation in the rural and small urban areas.

She also reported that she and Chairman Pat Huff recently participated in the Sayfie Leadership Conference, and listened to many ideas to improve Florida's future. She reported that among the main ideas discussed was the need to reach areas in the state that have not been tapped, such as those in the Heartland, for Eco-Tourism. She added that it was very encouraging.

She reported that Colleen Burton, who left the Council staff to pursue a seat on the Florida House of Representatives, was sworn in last month.

Ms. Steed thanked Chairman Pat Huff for serving as Chairman for the last four years and for his leadership, guidance and wisdom on the Council.

AGENDA ITEM #14 OTHER BUSINESS

Set date, time, and location for next meeting.

Ms. Steed stated that the next meeting would be held in Polk County since staff was anticipating a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Public Hearing for Ridgewoods Lakes. It will be held in Winter Haven at their Chain of Lakes Complex on February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

She stated that staff will be offering DRI orientation to the new members prior to the February meeting.

Chairman Huff thanked the staff for providing the Christmas baked goods and other treats for the Council's Christmas meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Patrick Huff, Chairman
December 10, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes

MULTI-FUNCTION PRINTER/COPIER FACT SHEET

- The Council currently leases one (1) black and white multi-function printer/copy machine and one (1) color multi-function printer/copy machine
- All-inclusive agreement which includes equipment, installation, maintenance, and all consumable supplies except paper.
- Equipment is used for:
 - Network Printing
 - Copying
 - Scanning
 - Faxing
- Cost-Per-Copy Contract
- Contract Volume (5 years):
 - Machine 1 (Black & White)

Copier Count: B&W	167,875
Printer Count: B&W	288,935
Total Count:	456,810

- Machine 2 (Color and Black & White)

Copier Count: B&W	144,216
Printer Count: B&W	217,775
Copier Count: Color	214,320
Printer Count: Color	347,376
Other	11,424
Total Count:	935,111

A “Sunshine” Reminder for Members of the Regional Planning Councils

by Norman White, General Counsel
to the Central Florida Regional Planning Council

So you have been asked to serve on a regional planning council in Florida? It cannot be that hard, can it? Certainly a job with no pay will have absolutely no pitfalls or unmarked hazards...right?

As the General Counsel for the Central Florida Regional Planning Council since 1992, I can assure you that there is a particular unmarked hazard in your roadway. It is called The Sunshine Law. The purpose of this article is to acquaint new members (and give a reminder to seasoned members) about this law and its implications. After all, violators of this law may have to pay court fines or even do time in the county jail (which is a terrible way of learning about jail overcrowding). So, read on with interest.

First, it is important to note that a regional planning council is, by design, a very eclectic group. The membership is divided into two categories: elected officials and gubernatorial appointees. It is possible (and very likely) to have a farmer from a rural area sitting next to a corporation president from a large city. A council mix could include a retired school principal appointed by the governor and a county commissioner who sells real estate. The diverse group usually only comes together at council meetings. This circumstance causes the first concern. It is natural for these members to get acquainted over coffee before the meeting. Sometimes, the conversation may turn to the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) hearing on the agenda. This is where the Sunshine Law throws a curve ball at you. Such conversations, though innocently started, are against the law.

The Sunshine Law is a nickname given to Florida Statute 286. This chapter is only about two pages in length. However, its impact extends into that coffee conversation and many other seemingly innocent areas of a council member's life. The law essentially addresses three separate subjects: (1) meetings between council members; (2) notice of the meetings; (3) minutes of the meetings. As a council member you can rest assured that your staff has procedures in place to comply with (2) and (3) above. Those areas are not where you can get in trouble. It is (1) that needs to be your focus (and thus the focus of this article).

You see, (2) and (3) provide the “sunshine” into a conversation. That is, when your staff properly publishes reasonable notice of a meeting and takes accurate minutes of the meeting, you can converse about any subject on your mind at the meeting without fear of running afoul of this law. It is when you have the conversation outside the “sunshine” that your General Counsel will wince. Over the years, I have seen some situations that, at first glance, appear innocent, but are actually violations of the law. Below are some examples. After each example is a suggested solution to avoid the problem.

EXAMPLE 1

The council has an upcoming DRI hearing. To become better educated on the development area, the applicant (or your staff) arrange for a bus tour to the proposed development site. Two council members are seated beside each other on the bus and the conversation is drifting toward the development.

SOLUTION: The bus trip needs to be the subject of a reasonable notice and accurate minutes. Your staff can handle that. When done properly, members of the press know about the trip and usually tag along (sometimes in the seat beside you). All conversations about the potential development should be said loud enough so the person taking the minutes (usually in the front of the bus) can hear you and take your comments down.

EXAMPLE 2

A meeting has been properly noticed and the secretary is taking minutes. During a break in the meeting, you and another council member find yourselves in the bathroom or the coffee room with each other. The conversation starts to drift.

SOLUTION: Don't discuss the pending council business at all. Remember this: even if a member of the press is in the room with you, the conversation is not in the "sunshine" and is unlawful. It is only when the minutes are being taken that things are rolling along as they should.

EXAMPLE 3

You are having a conversation with a member of the staff (your Executive Director, for example). You ask the staff member how another council member feels about a certain pending issue (like a staff pay raise or a DRI hearing).

SOLUTION: Don't ask. Using a staff member (or any other person) to have conversations with another council member is unlawful. It is just like the other council member was in the room. Also, you are putting the staff member in a very awkward position. Because the staffer works for you, he wants to make you happy and answer your questions. However, this is one of the only times that the staffer can be charged with a violation of the Sunshine Law and the possible criminal conviction would not look good on his resume when he is looking for another job.

EXAMPLE 4

You and another council member are email friends and you converse that way, rather than around the water cooler at the meetings.

SOLUTION: Don't do that either. Courts have held that email conversations are just like water cooler conversations.

EXAMPLE 5

You are sitting at a council meeting at your usual place. During the course of the meeting, the council member next to you leans over and whispers a comment about something unrelated to the agenda item being discussed. You whisper back and a conversation ensues.

SOLUTION: Though this is not a violation of the Sunshine Law, you will never convince the people in the back of the room of that, especially if they are on the losing end of your vote. So, it is always wiser to refrain from such conversations during a meeting. It will be one less time you will need to defend yourself. Keep in mind that such conversations, to be in the sunshine, must be heard by the person taking minutes. So actually discussing agenda items under such circumstances is an absolute no-no.

Well, the above five examples may have some of you scared. If so, you are overreacting to this article. There is so much you can talk about that is not covered by the Sunshine Law. The weather, ball game scores, church gossip, restaurant reviews are all subjects you can discuss

at any time with any other council member. You can even talk about votes that the council has already taken on items not coming back up for another vote. These conversations can take place in each other's homes or around the water cooler or in the car on the way to a meeting and you have no problem. It is only when you are talking about a matter that could be the subject of future council action that the "sunshine" needs to be in the room.

It has been my observation that council members do not want nor intend to violate this law. Problems usually occur when the hazard is unmarked and the conversation takes an unexpected turn. Your sensitivity to the constraints discussed here will go a long way toward giving you piece of mind.

The author received his Juris Doctorate Degree from the University of Florida in 1972 and has been practicing law in Florida since. His knowledge and expertise in the Sunshine Law came from serving as a city attorney for 15 years and serving as the General Counsel to the Central Florida Regional Planning Council since 1992.



MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT: January 2015

OUTREACH

- Along with Brian Teeple (NEFRC), Chair of the FRCA Executive Directors Advisory Committee, met with Bill Killingsworth, Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Division of Community Development, to discuss several issues, including the need to move forward with the Governor's economic development appointments to regional planning councils.
- Along with Chairman Teeple, met with representatives of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Division of Strategic Business Development and Bureau of Labor Market Statistics to see whether the Department and the Councils could better coordinate their respective economic modeling programs.
- Met with Jenna Titcomb and John Thomas from the Florida League of Cities regarding coordinating the regional activities of the Florida Local Government Coalition with the appropriate regional planning councils.
- Congratulated Jon Steverson on his appointment as the new Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- Reached out to the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, District 3, to promote the continuation of the District's transportation planning contracts with the Apalachee and West Florida Regional Planning Councils.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT/CAPACITY BUILDING

- To enhance partnerships and strengthen the relationship between regional planning councils and their state and federal partners, participated in or attending the following meetings: Rural Economic Development Initiative; Florida Defense Support Task Force; Enterprise Florida, Inc.'s (EFI's) Stakeholders Council; EFI's Legislative Committee meeting; EFI's meeting of its Board of Directors; Florida .
- Prepared and submitted to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity FRCA's 2014-15 second quarter report demonstrating implementation of the *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*.
- Attended the first meeting of the Florida Department of Transportation's Florida Transportation Plan/Strategic Intermodal System Plan Update Steering Committee.
- Participated in the Florida Chamber Foundation's 2015 Transportation Summit.
- Participated in a planning meeting for the Florida Civic Advance inaugural annual conference, which is an initiative of the Florida Consensus Center.
- Distributed funding announcements from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA, and U.S. Department of Transportation.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

- Provided support to FRCA's Executive Director, Ron Book, and Chairman Teeple to address certain legislative issues.
- Coordinated with Mr. Book to ensure FRCA was represented at the Sadowski Coalition's meetings with House and Senate leadership.
- Finalized the 2015 FRCA Legislative Agenda as approved by the FRCA Policy Board on January 9, 2015 and posted it to the FRCA website.
- Created and distributed a Legislative Highlights report covering the January 5-9, 2015 Interim Committee Week and reviewed pertinent bills and issued related bill tracking reports.

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

- Worked with Mr. Book to respond to a constituent concern in the Withlacoochee region.
- Participated in a variety of conference calls involving the Executive Directors, FRCA President Pat Huff, and Policy Board presenters in preparation for the January 9, 2015 FRCA Policy Board meeting.
- Prepared for and participated in the January 8-9 FRCA meetings.
- Finalized the logistics, secured speakers, developed agendas, and drafted meeting summaries for the February 12-13, 2015 FRCA meetings.