

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

AGRICULTURAL AND GREEN INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

DECEMBER 1, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 virus, this meeting was held through electronic media to reduce public gatherings and practice social distancing.

The Agricultural and Green Industry Advisory Committee (AGIAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 10:00 a.m., December 1, 2020 via remote session from the Brooksville Office, 2379 Broad Street, Florida 34604.

Committee Members Present via Teams

Curt Williams, Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Mac Carraway, Florida Turfgrass Assoc.
Travis Council, Turfgrass Producers of Florida
Phillip Hisey, On Top of the World Utilities
Chris Sanz, Florida Rec and Parks Assoc.
Kenneth Parker, Florida Strawberry Growers Assoc.
BJ Jarvis, UF/IFAS
David Boozer, Florida Tropical Fish Farm Bureau (phone)
Alan Jones, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Assoc. (phone)
Jay Vogel, Florida Forestry Assoc.
Jonathan Brown, Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Assoc.

Others Present

Christopher Pettit, FDACS
Kim Shugar, FDACS
Jessica Stampien
Ken Griner
Kerry Kates
Angela Chelette

Liaison

Jack Bispham (phone)

Staff Members Present

Virginia Singer, Facilitator
Michael Molligan
Randy Emberg
Barbara Garrett
Eryn Worthington
Jillian Garrage
Robyn Felix
Mark Luchte
Carol Estes
Jennette Seachrist
Eric DeHaven
Tom Hyle
Ken Griner
April Breton
Hannah Kuzlo

Recording Secretary

Kelly Page

Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website WaterMatters.org.

The numbers preceding the items below correspond to the order of presentations.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Committee Chair Curt Williams called the meeting to order and attendance was called.

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

None

3. Approval of September 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made for approval of September 15, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

No public comment was given.

5. Florida Agricultural Best Management Practices Update

Mr. Christopher Pettit, Director of Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, introduced himself and Ms. Kim Shugar, Deputy Director of Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, provided background as well as updates to Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) Best Management Practices (BMP) program. Ms. Shugar explained the Clean Waterways Act requires implementation verification site visits every two years for properties enrolled in the BMP program as well as demonstrate compliance with BMP record keeping requirements. Ms. Shugar also discussed FDACS' BMP research and cost share program as well as the research plan component to Senate Bill 712 and updates to BMP manuals.

Mr. Williams asked the difference in the reporting process if in a BMAP area versus outside of a BMAP. Ms. Shugar explained the site visits are required for all producers enrolled in the BMP program regardless of location.

Ms. BJ Jarvis asked how long the comment period will be open for rulemaking. Ms. Shugar said comments are needed as soon as possible as commenting period has ended.

Mr. Mac Carraway asked whether the legislature has had any conversations with FDACS regarding the direction of the BMP program that might influence legislation in the next session. Ms. Shugar said FDACS has not had any specific conversations with legislature.

Mr. Travis Council commented that the agriculture industry has some concerns and comments on the manual and the rule and intend to discuss with FDACS soon.

Mr. Alan Jones asked whether the budget reduction is scheduled for the next budget session. Ms. Shugar explained the request to cut 8.5 percent from the budget is requested of all state agencies and is for this fiscal year due to COVID.

Mr. Jonathan Brown expressed his concern that BMP nutrient values do not give growers the opportunity to produce sod. He explained that there is a huge difference with covering ground with vegetation versus being able to lift sod.

Mr. Jones identified leaching opportunities and suggested FDACS allow additional fertilizer applications following extreme drought and flood events.

6. ePermitting Replacement Project

Ms. Eryn Worthington, Project Manager, and Ms. Jillian Garrage, Business Analyst, provided an update of the District's new ePermitting program. Ms. Worthington identified the District's current ePermitting system, which is becoming outdated, and explained the process in identifying and implementing the new ePermitting system. Ms. Garrage provided a walkthrough of the new Environmental Resource Permit application and exemption process, as well as a view from a smart phone.

Mr. Williams asked whether the new system is live. Ms. Worthington explained the external application portal is currently in live production but has only been released to a testing pilot group. She added that staff expect it to be live to everyone in late spring.

7. Remote Meeting Discussion

Mr. Michael Molligan, Employee and External Relations Division Director, discussed the introduction of remote meetings during COVID and explained the committee has the pleasure to decide whether to continue holding meetings remotely post-COVID.

Mr. Williams suggested remote meetings encourage better participation and does not feel a hybrid option would work well. Mr. Carraway agreed, and suggested to send a letter to non-participants that express the importance of these meetings. Mr. Molligan explained an outreach effort was recently done for all committees.

Ms. Jarvis suggested electronic meetings are nice and convenient, and expressed the significance of in-person networking.

8. Development of agenda topics for the next Public Supply Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the District's Tampa Office.

Ms. Jarvis mentioned Dr. Eban Bean's progress in developing a tool in identifying urban water quality issues and Mr. Hisey added the compost and impacts of leachate study is being wrapped up with On Top of the World.

9. Announcements and Other Business

Mr. Williams identified the District's 2020 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) and suggested the agricultural industry believes there is a discrepancy in projected irrigated crop land. Mr. Williams said Governing Board member Joel Schleicher wanted to hear what industry leaders are seeing and what they think might happen with trends. Mr. Williams suggested there will be a higher demand for food with more people coming into the state, but also an increase with green industry as more houses are needing to be landscaped. He opened the discussion to committee members.

Mr. Hisey suggested On Top of the World is seeing water use trends going down and industry should prepare itself for more efficient irrigation systems.

Ms. Jarvis said Dr. Place, Dean of IFAS, is stepping down from his position and a search committee is currently looking for a replacement.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.