



**NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**March 2, 2023**

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**MEETING WORKSHOP**

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors, pursuant to Chapter 120.525, F.S., held a hybrid meeting both in-person, at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL, and virtually via Zoom, on Thursday, March 2, 2023, at 10:03 a.m.

**President DeFoor** welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with the following members present:

- BAKER:** Commissioner Bennett (**zoom**)  
Mr. Griffis (**in person**)  
Mr. Register (**in person**)
- CLAY:** Mr. Bourre (**in person**)  
Mr. Steve Kennedy (**in person**)  
Commissioner Jim Renninger (**in person**)
- DUVAL:** Councilmember Randy DeFoor (**in person**)  
Councilmember Joyce Morgan (**zoom**)
- FLAGLER:** Mayor David Alfin (**zoom**)  
Mayor Catherine Robinson (**zoom**)  
Commissioner David Sullivan (**zoom**)
- NASSAU:** Commissioner John Martin (**in person**)
- PUTNAM:** Commissioner Harvey (**zoom**)
- ST. JOHNS:** Commissioner Christian Whitehurst (**in person**)
- EX-OFFICIO:** Mr. Brian Austin, FDOT (**zoom**)  
Mr. Doug Conkey, SJRWMD (**in person**)  
Ms. Katlyn Craver, FDEP (**zoom**)  
Mr. Hart, FDEO (**in person**)
- Excused:** Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Arnold, Commissioner Horvath, and Mayor Lynch
- Absent:** Commissioner Adamczyk, Mayor Brown, Commissioner Condon, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Drew, and
- Guests:** Jessica Beach, CJ Davila, Emily Ducker, Ron Fox, Dennis Ragosta, Bill White, 19046528573, and other members of the public
- Presenters:** -Dr. Jennifer Languell, President/Founder, Trifecta Construction; Ms. Mary Tappouni, Treasurer, Florida Green Building Coalition

-Ms. Lori Burklew, Regional Water Supply Planning Coordinator,  
St. Johns River Water Management District

Staff: Matamron Bacon, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Annie Sieger, Donna Starling,  
Sheron Forde, et al.

Roll call determined that a **quorum was not present**. Therefore, the meeting was held as a workshop. All action items are deferred to the April Executive Committee meeting.

#### INVITATION TO SPEAK

**President DeFoor** stated that members of the public are welcome to speak on any item before the Board and will be recognized during public comment.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

Staff's review report of the Comprehensive Plan Amendments were received and reviewed by the President, and Membership, prior to this meeting. Therefore, **utilizing the Alternate Review process, President DeFoor approved staff's Comprehensive Plan Amendments Review Report.**

#### OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

##### Program Spotlight: Transportation Disadvantaged

Mr. Matamron Bacon, Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinator, provided a presentation of the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program. Members who serve as Chair of their County's Local Coordinating Boards (LCB) were acknowledged. The LCBs are comprised of various state and local stakeholders who determine service standards and provide guidance to service providers. The State has contracted with the Northeast Florida Regional Council to serve as the Designated Official Planning Agency since 1994 for six of the seven counties; Duval County was added in 2021. The presentation included a brief background of the TD program, including an organizational chart; Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for each county and their roles; LCB representation requirements; and program highlights for fiscal year 2022-2023. Discussion followed.

##### Reserves Transfer

**Chair Register** reminded the Members of the Reserves Policy created in 2021, which states when and how to transfer funds to Reserves. Based on the audited financials for the FY 21/22, the Personnel, Budget & Finance Policy Committee approved the transfer of the maximum amount of twenty percent (\$10,181) of the audited net income to Reserves. A brief discussion followed.

##### Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami provided an update on resiliency activities over the past month and highlighted the Resilient First Coast Collaborative, in which 17 organizations have signed partner agreements, Resilient Florida Program Planning Grant Awards for Fiscal Year 2022-23; Florida Department of Environmental Protection's RRE Grant Project for Vulnerability Assessment Coordination task submittals; a tour of Natural and Nature-Based Features in Northeast Florida for the Silver Jackets project; an overview of a recent meeting regarding the Military Installations Resilience Review; and the Council's ongoing resiliency work. Discussion followed.



### Regional Leadership Academy Highlights

Mr. Nolen provided an overview of the Regional Leadership Academy, its participants, and the program's commitment to regional visioning and growth for the betterment of local communities. Highlights of the first two programs were provided: 1) Baker County's 'Making a Living, Making a Life – Economy and Quality of Life' that included a tour of Heritage Park, and 2) Putnam County's 'Flourishing Environment and Revival', which included a trip to Ravine Gardens State Park. Mr. Nolen provided a preview to the next program, which takes place on March 29<sup>th</sup>, that includes a visit to Flagler County's Princess Place Preserve.

### Ecotourism & Trails Project Update

Mr. Anderson shared information on the Ecotourism & Trails kickoff meeting of February 22<sup>nd</sup>, which hosted approximately 65 interested participants (of the 115 who registered) from across the Region. An overview of the meeting was provided, including setting expectations and general scope and desired outcomes, question and answer session, group polling on Ecotourism and trails, and discussion of next steps. Desired outcomes included an inventory of the existing resources, a regional vision, regional marketing approach, access to funding opportunities, and an understanding of qualitative and economic benefits. A project schedule was shared that would be updated on a monthly basis. Next steps include the establishment of a steering committee, and building a foundation for the GIS work. Staff will be reaching out to local governments and organizations asking them to share their data and other information. Staff will provide an update regularly.

Ms. Payne shared information on the reach that this project has taken, in that staff have been contacted by various state agencies wanting to be on the Steering Committee, i.e., the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Transportation, and also the Department of Interior and the U.S. National Park Service. There is a wide variety of interests of folks who want to see this work in Northeast Florida move forward and who have volunteered their time and expertise to help with the project; we're excited about it. Discussion followed.

### Presentation: Babcock Ranch

Dr. Jennifer Languell, President/Founder, Trifecta Construction, provided a presentation entitled, 'Resilient By Design' relating to the Babcock Ranch; the country's first solar powered town. She highlighted some current realities that have contributed to sustainability concerns. Three things that drives whether or not green building and sustainable development occur include regulation, funding, and corporate culture. She provided an overview of the development of Babcock Ranch, beginning with the largest land purchase in the State Florida, 92,000 acres; 74,000 acres was placed back into conservation. Of the remaining 18,000 acres being developed, approximately 61 percent is being put into reserves and open space. Dr. Languell shared information on the Town's location, 20 miles from the water, which dictated the Town Plan that focused on water conservation, storm resiliency and renewable energy. The entire Town was built to the Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) standards, which was used to guide the sustainability components of the community. The Town received a Platinum Certification. The FGBC components for this certification include preservation and conservation, circulation, utilities, amenities, and education.



Dr. Languell also shared information on the Town's ability to withstand 131 mph hurricane force winds during Hurricane Ian, without any loss of power. She highlighted the factors that helped the community's ability to shelter in place, such as utilities, stormwater, native vegetation, and structures. While their buildings are built to withstand 160 mph winds, they also have a structure built to withstand hurricane force winds of 180 mph. The buildings are also built according to Florida Building Code, which requires a continuous load path; the home is tied together from the roof to the foundation. This helps to keep roofs on during these types of storms. The Town did sustain damage during Hurricane Ian, however, the residences, community buildings and infrastructure damage was approximately \$500,000 compared to the \$75 billion other communities are dealing with. Post Ian, plans are being considered to fortify structures, lakes pumping to address needs. A brief discussion followed.

Ms. Mary Tappouni, Treasurer, Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC), and local general contractor and business owner, shared additional information on sustainability efforts in Northeast Florida. She stated that FGBC is a Statewide organization; they also work with other Regional Councils, have partnered with this Council on affordable housing, and the Florida Housing Coalition. She informed the members that the City of Jacksonville is doing FGBC certification on public buildings. They are also working in St. Johns and Clay Counties. Discussion followed.

#### Northeast Florida Regional Water Supply Plan Update

Ms. Lori Burklew, Regional Water Supply Planning Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District, presented information on the North Florida Water Supply Plan that is currently being drafted. The Plan is being coordinated in conjunction with the Suwannee River Water Management District and sets the water supply and identifies constraints for the next five plus years. The presentation highlighted the North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership (NFRWSP) mandate; the historic water use and population versus projected water demand and population in the NFRWSP; the status assessment for adopted Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) of water bodies – with two in our region that are not meeting their MFLs, identified as Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva.

Ms. Burklew stated that the Water Management District's (WMD) are currently reaching out to stakeholders to develop projects and solutions that will allow growth without impacting resources. Water conservation, recharge, and alternative water supply are tools that can be utilized to address resource constraints. Since 2015, they have worked with stakeholders to implement and fund over 70 water supply related projects through the cost-share program. She stated that the cost-share program for fiscal year 2023-2024 recently closed, but will open again early next year as this is a recurring, annual program. While individual projects will be part of the solution going forward, they will need more large-scale regional projects like the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project in Clay County in order to meet going demand. She added that water conservation is the most important action that can be taken to sustain water supply.

In summary, Ms. Burklew stated that it has been determined that ground water alone will not be sufficient to meet the demands of the Region; the WMD will be working with stakeholders to develop projects through the end of April with the intent to finalize the Water Supply Plan later this year. A brief discussion followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Shared an article, ‘As Business Environments continue to Change Post Pandemic, State and local incentive programs must continue to evolve.’ The article concluded that, “States and communities that are progressive and continue to evolve their incentive programs will be successful and generates a positive return on investments for the governmental entities providing the incentives.”

Florida Department of Transportation – Nothing to report.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection – reminded about a variety of grant programs available, i.e., the Resilient Florida, Land and Recreation, Florida Communities Trust, and Recreational Trails. These may fall in line with the resiliency and ecotourism goals of the Council.

St. Johns River Water Management District – Mr. Conkey stated that April’s Water Conservation Month Proclamations reminder have been pushed out to local governments and thanks everyone for their support.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

The Members were informed of a flurry of Council activities on grants as we approach the end of the State’s fiscal year; local government technical assistance, opioid discussions in Baker County, an upcoming EDA Recovery workshop in Palatka, and the Clay County Strategic Plan.

Ms. Payne also shared the need for a quorum at the meetings through in person participation.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be May 4, 2023.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:04 p.m.