

## Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

September 17, 2024

4:00 pm

Extension Auditorium

22712 W Newberry Road, Newberry, FL 32669

Pages

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of the Agenda**
3. **New Business**
  - 3.1 **Review and update of Annual Workplan & Accomplishments Report:  
FY2024-2025** 1
4. **Approval of Minutes for 8-20-2024 meeting** 5
5. **Attendance Report** 9
6. **Chair Comments**
7. **Committee Member Comments**
8. **Public Comment**
9. **Next Meeting - October 15th @ Extension Auditorium**
10. **Adjournment**

**Rural Concerns Advisory Committee**  
**Annual Workplan and Accomplishments Report: FY2024-2025**

**Chair:** Dr. Rodney Clouser

**Board Liaison:** Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management

**Staff Support:** Ben Chumley, Regina Williams, and other departments as requested for presentations

**Brief History of Committee**

The Committee was established by Resolution 03-34 on April 8, 2003 to provide guidance and advice to the Board regarding rural concerns and issues within Alachua County. The Committee has been extended by the BoCC five times, the most recent of which occurred on June 25, 2019, where Resolution 19-66 granted the Committee a six-year extension to December 31, 2025.

**Mission Statement**

The responsibilities of the Advisory Committee shall be to:

- A. Establish the importance of our rural, unincorporated agricultural and historic settlements;
- B. Assist in the development and evaluation of policies and programs affecting the rural areas of the County;
- C. Represent the rural areas in the County's various community planning processes and hearings; and
- D. Assist in the recognition and determination of the needs of the County's rural residents and advising the Board accordingly.

**Prior Year Accomplishments [to be reviewed & confirmed by RCAC]**

**Held 9 meetings/workshops through September 17, 2024 \***

• **Received presentations and provided input on:**

10/17/23 Review and discussion of proposed amendments to the Alachua County Unified Land Development Code – Angeline Jacobs, Planner, Growth Management Dept.

01/16/24 Final Review of RCAC Suggestions and Questions on proposed amendments to the Alachua County Unified Land Development Code – Angeline Jacobs, Planner, Growth Management Dept.

Reducing Pollution from Septic Systems in Alachua County – Stacie Greco, Water Resources Program Manager, Environmental Protection Dept.

*(continued on next page)*

- 02/20/24 Alachua County's Land Conservation Program: Protection of Water Resources, Wildlife Habitat, and Developing Agricultural Land Protection Strategy – Andi Christman, Environmental Program Manager, Environmental Protection Dept.
- 03/19/24 Update on Pavement Management Program, Transportation Capital Improvement Program (TCIP) FY 2023 FY 2032, and use of infrastructure surtax funds – Brian Kauffman, Asst. Director, Public Works
- 04/16/24 Impact of Climate on Alachua County's Agriculture and Rural Lands – Shane Williams, Storm Water Engineer, Environmental Protection
- 05/21/24 Update on Alachua County Agricultural Land Protection Strategy – Andi Christman, Environmental Program Manager, Alachua County Environmental Protection Department
- 07/16/24 Update and discussion of Alachua County Agricultural Land Protection Strategy
- 08/20/24 Update and discussion Alachua County Agricultural Land Protection Strategy: Update and RCAC Input & Concerns – Andi Christman  
Discussion of potential future agenda item on Agricultural Tax Classification Assessment issues
- **Discussed and took action on Committee Items:**
  - 10/17/23 Final review and approval of Annual Workplan and Accomplishments Report: FY2023-2024  
Nominations and elections of officers
  - 03/19/24 Discussion of RCAC 2024 Meeting Schedule
  - 09/17/24 Review and update of RCAC Annual Workplan and Accomplishments Report: FY2024-2025
- **Made recommendation to BoCC:**
  - 09/17/24 Approved letter of support for proposed Agricultural Land Protection Strategy

**\* staff to add any additional accomplishments through 9/30/2024 (FY2023-2024)**

## **Goals & Objectives for Upcoming Year**

**The Rural Concerns Advisory Committee goals and objectives will be focused around three “pillars” of issues/concerns:**

- I. Rural Health and Service Delivery,**
- II. Rural Economic Development, and**
- III. Rural Policy Concerns**

The focus of the goals and objectives for FY2024-25 is to educate the advisory committee on potential topics of concern in rural areas of Alachua County in order to be prepared for emerging issues of importance if input is needed and to offer suggestions when appropriate.

### **I. Rural Health and Other County Service Delivery**

- A. Review and solicit presentations on health services and delivery of those services and grant opportunities in Alachua County rural communities/cities/towns (Alachua County Health Dept and UF Mobile Outreach Clinic)
- B. Explore broadband opportunities/partnerships and limitations in rural Alachua County, related to expansion of telemedicine to rural and underserved communities and opportunities for alternative financing including grants and guaranteed loans.
- C. Continued discussion of litter issues/concerns in Alachua County and right-of-way maintenance
- D. Review of County solid waste program collection and providers
- E. Review of issues concerning Alachua County Animal Services

### **II. Rural Economic Development**

- A. Increase public awareness of the scope, size and importance of agriculture and ag related industry in Alachua County – land, labor, taxes, prevention of economic leakages and exports of County-related agricultural products, including procure or recommend completion of economic impact study
- B. Advise BoCC on importance of additional funding on scope, size and importance of the County rural roads and bridge system for agriculture-related prosperity
- C. Review and monitor local food systems, including the new interlocal agreement with the City of Gainesville
- D. Review and monitor value-added food service infrastructure, including potential new meat processing facility in the County
- E. Continue conversation about small business grants and/or support in rural areas including those bringing services listed in ‘Rural Health & Service Delivery’ topic, and including the County’s Small-Producer Agriculture Capital Support (SMAACA) Grant program

### **III. Rural Policy Concerns**

- A. Continue education efforts for the BoCC and citizens of Alachua County on agricultural issues and other issues affecting the rural area including support of local markets, local farmers and local food production including limited resource producers
- B. Provide input where appropriate on the following, including but not limited to:
  - Feral hog management
  - Invasive species control programs conducted by the County
  - Effective means of enforcing rules and rights relating to private roads and easements in the rural area
- C. Continue to promote and coordinate education of Best Management Practices for agriculture producers, governmental organizations and citizens of Alachua County, including State guidelines
- D. Stay abreast of law enforcement and EMS services relating and critical to the rural area
- E. Request update from Alachua County Property Appraiser's office on Florida State Use Value Assessment Law and application in Alachua County
- F. Investigate farmland preservation programs/areas in surrounding counties
- G. Discuss a potential information gathering methodology to integrate rural concerns as included in the Committee Mission Statement, to "Assist in the recognition and determination of the needs of the County's rural residents and advising the Board accordingly."
- H. Make recommendations to BOCC on any Agricultural Issues and other issues affecting the rural area and emerging issues in the rural area and at the rural-urban fringe including review of options and funding sources for improving rural to urban transportation systems
- I. Monitor the Comprehensive Plan as well as implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Unified Land Development Code on rural lands and relating to agriculture and local food production
- J. Continue discussion of energy conservation and generation methods that may impact the agriculture community and/or quality of life in the rural area
- K. Provide input where appropriate on septic systems (update on new septic system regulations in rural area)

#### **Other Potential Concerns include:**

- Continue to review and comment on management of Alachua County Forever properties, including development and implementation of business plans for timber harvesting, cattle grazing and hunting leases
- Provide input where appropriate on the following, including but not limited to:
  - County water supply issues
  - Stormwater issues
  - Fire services issues
  - Integration of emergency response systems for the rural area

**DRAFT**  
**Rural Concerns Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**

August 20, 2024  
4:00 pm  
Community Support Services, Classroom A  
218 SE 24<sup>th</sup> St., Gainesville, FL 32641

**1. Call to Order**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dr. Rodney Clouser (Chair), Micky McMillan, George Mells, John Nix, Missy Norman, Dr. Cindy Sanders, Amy Van Scoik, Brent Weisman

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jordan Callaham (Vice Chair), Leah Compton, Janet Hearn

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management  
Ben Chumley, Principal Planner, Growth Management

**PUBLIC PRESENT:**

none

In the absence of Chair Clouser and Vice Chair Callaham, a motion was made by Mr. Nix, and seconded, to appoint Dr. Sanders as Acting Chair.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

Acting Chair Sanders called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm. There were 6 members physically present, which was confirmed to satisfy the requirement for at least a quorum under County Advisory Board Guidelines.

Ms. Van Scoik joined the meeting at 4:08 pm.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

Acting Chair Sanders asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was made by Mr. Nix to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Mells.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Old Business**

**3.1 Alachua County Agricultural Land Protection Strategy: Update and RCAC Input & Concerns – Andi Christman**

Ms. Christman gave an update on the August 19<sup>th</sup> public workshop on the topic. There were questions and discussion by Committee members regarding financial issues such as price per acre for easements, potential for periodic reevaluation of land values, annual program funding amounts, and potential for state funding; ranking criteria issues such as

inclusion of regional vs. local markets, Best Management Practices, exclusion of silviculture, location within municipalities, and overall hierarchy of rankings; and administration issues such as recording of easements, enforcement of agreements, and an Agricultural Advisory Board.

Chair Clouser joined the meeting at 5:06 pm. Acting Chair Sanders turned the meeting over to Chair Clouser; he asked if there was any further discussion on the item.

Ms. McMillan said that the chair letter to the County Commission that was approved last month needs to be revised before it is sent. Chair Clouser said that he had waited to send the letter until it could include the results of the public workshop, which had been postponed until yesterday. There was discussion regarding the results of the August 19<sup>th</sup> public workshop and that the previous Committee concerns had been addressed.

Ms. McMillan made a motion to draft a new chair letter to the County Commission of support for the Agricultural Land Protection Strategy based on the information discussed today; seconded by Dr. Sanders.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously (8-0).**

#### **4. New Business**

##### **4.1 Discussion of potential future agenda item on Agricultural Tax Classification Assessment issues**

Chair Clouser asked Dr. Sanders to share information about the issue with the Committee. She said several agricultural producers in the last month have had issues with agricultural assessment inspections by the Property Appraiser's Office. There was discussion regarding the statutory relationship between the Property Appraiser and the County Commission, the Committee's role in the issue, communication between the Property Appraiser's Office and leaders of local agricultural groups, the Florida Dept. of Revenue (DOR) requirements and guidelines, and inviting staff from the Property Appraiser's Land Valuation program to speak to RCAC at an upcoming meeting about the DOR guidelines and how they are implemented in Alachua County. Chair Clouser asked staff to reach out to the Property Appraiser's Office to request guest speakers on the topic for the October meeting.

#### **5. Approval of minutes for 07-16-2024 meeting**

Motion was made by Mr. Nix to approve the minutes for the 05-21-2024 meeting; seconded by Dr. Sanders.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **6. Attendance Report**

Mr. McMurry said the current Attendance Report showed all members in compliance with the attendance policy at this time. He said the Attendance Report is always sent out with the meeting materials and that if members have any questions about their status, they should ask staff. He said there are two positions currently being advertised, the vacant Alternate position and the Farm Bureau position with current term ending September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Chair Comments**

Chair Clouser said the Annual Workplan review and update should be the main item on the September meeting agenda.

**8. Committee Members Comments**

Chair Clouser asked if there were any issues members would like to bring up. Ms. McMillan asked about the status of local broadband provision. Chair Clouser said the discussions at the broadband Local Technology Planning Team (LTPT) have been grant-oriented but have not included specific information on things such as local miles of infrastructure provided, costs, and new subscribers served; he said he would try to attend the next meeting.

Ms. McMillan said that Public Works discussed with the Committee in March that “no truck” signs would be placed within a year on certain County roads. Mr. Nix said there needs to be pressure on placing and enforcing the signs. Chair Clouser asked staff to ask Public Works for a current progress report.

**9. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**10. Next Meeting**

September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Extension Office.

**11. Adjournment**

Motion was made by Dr. Sanders to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Nix.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Clouser called the meeting to a close at 6:02 pm.





# Alachua County Advisory Board Program

## Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

Dr. Rodney L. Clouser, Chair  
Jordan Callaham, Vice Chair

August 29, 2024  
Honorable Mary Alford, Chair  
Alachua County Board of County Commissioners  
12 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Gainesville, FL 32601

### Re: Agricultural Land Protection Strategy

Dear Chair Alford,

At its meetings on February 20, May 21, and August 20, 2024, the Rural Concerns Advisory Committee (RCAC) received presentations and had discussions with Andi Christman, Land Conservation Program Manager, on the proposed Agricultural Land Protection Strategy for Alachua County; the Committee also discussed the topic at its July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. This has been one of the most in-depth discussions of a single topic in the six years I have been a member of the Committee! We appreciate Ms. Christman's willingness to provide information and answer questions from the Committee.

Following discussion of the topic at its August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, the RCAC unanimously (8-0) approved a motion for me to send this letter of support for the proposed Agricultural Land Protection Strategy. The Committee's questions and concerns regarding the strategy's long-term goals, ranking criteria, and public participation process have been adequately addressed and we believe the proposed Agricultural Land Protection Strategy has the potential to benefit the citizens of Alachua County by preserving agriculture lands in our community.

We thank you for considering the views and input of the Rural Concerns Advisory Committee on this matter.

Respectfully,

*Rodney L. Clouser*

Rodney L. Clouser PhD, Chair  
Alachua County Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

cc: Alachua County Board of County Commissioners  
Michele L. Lieberman, County Manager  
Sylvia Torres, County Attorney  
Andi Christman, Land Conservation Program Manager, Environmental Protection  
Jeffrey L. Hays, Director, Growth Management  
Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management

08/21/2024

## Attendance Report Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

Staff Liaison: Ken McMurry

Member Position	Term Start	Term End	02-20-24	03-19-24	04-16-24	05-21-24	07-16-24	08-20-24	Meetings Attended
<b>Callaham, Jordan</b> Member from the Farm Bureau	10-01-2021	9-30-2024	A	P	P	P	P	A	4 of 6
<b>Clouser, Rodney</b> Member from UF-IFAS	10-01-2022	9-30-2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
<b>Compton, Leah</b> Member Chosen At Large	06-11-2024	5-31-2027	--	--	--	--	P	A	1 of 2
<b>Hearn, Janet</b> Residing in Unincorporated Area Outside Urban Cluster...	10-01-2023	9-30-2026	P	P	P	P	P	A	5 of 6
<b>McMillan, Micky</b> Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	02-01-2024	9-30-2026	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
<b>Mells, George</b> Residing in Unincorporated Area Outside Urban Cluster...	10-01-2022	9-30-2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
<b>Nix, John</b> Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	10-01-2023	9-30-2026	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
<b>Norman, Missy</b> Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	05-14-2024	9-30-2026	--	--	--	P	A	P	2 of 3
<b>Sanders, Cindy</b> Member from County Extension Office	10-01-2023	9-30-2026	A	P	P	P	P	P	5 of 6
<b>Van Scoik, Amy</b> Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	06-01-2023	9-30-2025	A	P	P	A	A	P	3 of 6
<b>Weisman, Brent</b> Residing in Unincorporated Area Outside Urban Cluster...	06-25-2024	5-31-2027	--	--	--	--	P	P	2 of 2
<b>VACANT</b> Alternate Member Chosen At Large	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

P = Present

A = Absent

Attendance is defined as being physically present at the meeting for one hour or 50% of the length of the meeting, whichever is shorter. Any regular or alternate member whose attendance is less than 50% of the last 6 consecutive meetings shall automatically be removed from the advisory committee.