



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 23-00170

Agenda Date: 6/13/2023

Agenda Item Name:

City of High Springs Proposed Extension of Municipal Water and Sewer Lines

Presenter:

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Description:

Presentation on the City of High Springs request to extend its municipal water and sewer lines into the unincorporated area along NW County Road 236 between the current city limits and the interchange with I-75. In accordance with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, any extension of municipal water and sewer lines in the unincorporated area outside of the Urban Cluster must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC/Board) based on certain criteria in Policy 3.1.5 of the Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element.

Recommended Action:

Direct staff to work with the City of High Springs to prepare an interlocal agreement for County and City approval that would potentially allow for the extension of municipal water and sewer lines into the unincorporated area and shall include the following parameters:

1. The interlocal agreement shall be adopted by both the City and County prior to the City's adoption of its ordinance establishing a Utility Services District in accordance with Section 180.02 Florida Statutes and its ordinance addressing connections in the unincorporated area. The City's ordinances shall reflect any mutually agreed upon conditions of the interlocal agreement.
2. The interlocal agreement shall identify any potential basis for approval by the County Commission of the extension of water and sewer lines into the unincorporated area in accordance with Policy 3.1.5 of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element.
3. The extension of municipal water and sewer services is limited to the corridor extending generally along NW County Road 236 from the current High Springs City Limits to the interchange with I-75 (a map depicting this area will be included in the interlocal agreement). Any future extensions outside of this area will be subject to additional approval by the BoCC.
4. Existing or proposed development around the interchange of I-75 and CR 236 on property with a "Tourist/Entertainment" land use designation pursuant to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan

may connect to the City's water and sewer systems.

5. Proposed development within all other unincorporated areas not described in #4 above shall require additional approval by the County Commission to connect to the City's water and sewer systems.
6. The City's wastewater (sewer) line shall be engineered so that it is not available for connection, as defined in Florida Statutes, within the unincorporated areas other than those designated "Tourist Entertainment" pursuant to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan around the I-75 interchange.
7. The City of High Springs acknowledges that a portion of the City's proposed Utilities Service Area is within the County Growth Management Area as designated in the Alachua County Home Rule Charter, and that development within that area is governed by the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations in accordance with the County's Charter.
8. The interlocal agreement shall address considerations relating to how potential future annexation into the City of High Springs may affect connection requirements.

Prior Board Motions:

N/A

Fiscal Note:

There is no fiscal impact to County government associated with this item.

Strategic Guide:

Infrastructure and Environment

Background:

The City of High Springs was awarded a \$2,484,600 FDEP grant to construct a wastewater (sewer) service line and related infrastructure along CR 236 from the High Springs city limits to the I-75 interchange. The City was also awarded funding from FDEO to construct a potable water service line and related infrastructure along the same corridor.

As part of this project, the City is proposing to establish a Utilities Service District in accordance with Section 180.02, Florida Statutes which would enable the City to extend its municipal services outside of City limits and into unincorporated areas. The City is also proposing amendments to its water and wastewater connection ordinance. For unincorporated areas, multi-family and commercial type development would generally be required to connect to the City's water and sewer systems if available; single-family residential homes would not be required to connect but could voluntarily choose to connect.

The City's proposed utility service lines would extend through an approximately 3-mile corridor of the unincorporated area. Approximately two-thirds of this corridor falls within the County Growth Management Area. Pursuant to the Alachua County Charter, the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan

and Land Development Regulations govern development within this Area regardless of whether any portion the Area is annexed into a municipality. The majority of the corridor is designated as “Rural/Agriculture” in the County’s Comprehensive Plan; the areas around the interchange of I-75 and CR 236 are designated as “Tourist Entertainment” which allows for commercial type uses oriented toward providing services for short term visitors, such as gas stations, restaurants, lodging, and special entertainment facilities.

In accordance with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, Policy 3.1.5 of the Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element, the Board of County Commissioners must approve any extension of central water & sewer lines in the unincorporated area outside the Urban Cluster based on specific criteria provided in the policy (see policy attached to agenda item).

There is a potential basis under Policy 3.1.5 of the Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element for the Board to approve the extension. Specifically, that the extension would serve a purpose consistent with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, particularly the service of tourist/entertainment land uses consistent with the Future Land Use Element and the protection of water quality in accordance with the Conservation and Open Space Element.

In addition, there could be a potential public health benefit to providing municipal wastewater service to existing and future tourist/entertainment type land uses around the interchange instead of those land uses being served by package wastewater treatment plants or septic systems. This area of the County is classified on the adopted Floridan Aquifer Recharge Areas Map (Map 2 of Conservation and Open Space Element) as “high vulnerability”. In addition, this area of the County is within the Outstanding Florida Springs Priority Focus Area (PFA) for Hornsby Springs (Map 6 of Conservation and Open Space Element) and it is within the area subject to the Santa Fe River Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP).

If the Board wishes to move forward with the process for approval of the extension in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, staff is recommending that the City and County develop an interlocal agreement to address details about types of development that would be required to or permitted to connect to the City’s water and sewer system in the unincorporated area. The interlocal agreement would help to ensure that the availability of municipal water and sewer service will not result in any new development within the rural unincorporated area that is inconsistent with the County’s Comprehensive Plan. A similar type of interlocal agreement was approved in 2011 in connection with the GRU wastewater line extension to the City of Waldo.