



Alachua County Special Meeting

Minutes

January 9, 2024, 9:30 AM

Present: Vice Chair Mary Alford, Commissioner Charles S. Chestnut, IV, Commissioner Ken Cornell, Chair Anna Prizzia, Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler

A. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Prizzia moved adoption of the agenda with the amendment of removing item #1. The motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Chestnut absent.

2nd Commissioner Wheeler

B. Items for Discussion

1. Essential Social Services – Commissioner Anna Prizzia

This Item was removed by motion.

2. Community Navigators - Commissioner Anna Prizzia

Commissioner Prizzia stated that her vision is broader than just housing issues. She envisions the navigators going out in the community and making contact with impacted people and assisting them through the social services process and the challenges they are having. She envisions the program assisting with things such as the community paramedic program which could save the county money. Instead of a safety net she would prefer the concept of a safety harness and catching people before they fall. Fire Rescue deals with many of the frequent fliers so it would be helpful to have collaboration between the two programs. She wanted to make sure that the Board was aware that she is pushing for this and are ok with the concept.

Commissioner Cornell stated that the County does provide a lot of services and provides assistance but navigating through all of the

processes can be difficult. The coordination between departments could ultimately save taxpayer dollars.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that she has been working with the Community Action Group. But there are many other groups that are providing services, and she feels getting the church groups to assist with navigating the process would be very beneficial.

Chair Alford stated that she has been involved with the Community Weatherization Coalition. Part of the work is educating the people so that they can pass that on to other individuals. She thinks anything that can provide more awareness in the community would be beneficial.

3. Needs Assessments (301 Corridor) - Chair Mary Alford

Chair Alford stated that during Covid she assisted with delivering food. She remembers a home in the 301 district that had no floor. She believes there is enough data to apply for grants to fund a service center to assist this corridor that is clearly in need.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that if the County is going to study the area, she wants to make sure that there is a scope and that the Board is committed to actually moving forward with the solutions. She does not want another study that is going to be placed on a shelf.

Commissioner Wheeler feels that Newberry, Alachua, and High Springs are doing well. That she thinks that Waldo and Hawthorne need some assistance to get things moving in a positive direction. She would like to see the County focus efforts in those locations.

Commissioner Cornell stated that he is excited to hear about investment in the eastern portion of the County.

C. Closing Comments

1. Public Comment

Commissioner Alford recognized Sherry Crinky who presented comments to the Board regarding the need for services in the eastside of the County. She stated that she would like to discuss with Commissioners things such as a digital access center and other ideas that she has for the area.

Commissioner Cornell and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Deputy County Manager Smart stated that the County efforts in the Copeland Area could serve as a model on how to proceed with this

endeavor. He also stated that the Manager is working on having the Tourist Development Director and the Economic Development Director work together to expand the scope of what their individual efforts can accomplish and use tourism as an economic development tool.

Chair Alford stated that she would like economic development to be included in the effort along with Growth Management.

Commissioner Prizzia moved to direct staff to develop a scope of work and a plan for developing a needs assessment for the 301 corridor and bring that back to the Board during the budget development cycle. With a focus on to attracting grant funding to address the immediate social services needs and economic development opportunities in the 301 corridors. The motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Chestnut absent.

2nd Commissioner Cornell

Deputy County Manager Smart stated that an update on the approaching storm will be provided at the regular meeting.

2. Commission Comment

Commissioner Wheeler presented comments about the Blueberry Festival and the Cleanup Event on the Eastside of the County.

D. Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.