

DRAFT
Rural Concerns Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2024
4:00 pm
Community Support Services, Classroom A
218 SE 24th 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 19th 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 19th 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 30th.

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 17th 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.