

**Rural Concerns Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

November 19, 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), Leah Compton, Janet Hearn, Micky McMillan, John Nix, Missy Norman, Dr. Cindy Sanders, Amy Van Scoik, Brent Weisman

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

none

STAFF PRESENT:

Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management

Regina Williams, Planning Assistant, Growth Management

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Marilyn Wimen

Hailey Hubbard

Chair Clouser called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. There were 9 members present, which was confirmed to satisfy the requirement for at least a quorum under County Advisory Board Guidelines. Chair Clouser welcomed the members of the public and said that public comment would be taken at appropriate points on the agenda.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Clouser asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was made by Mr. Nix to approve the agenda; seconded by Ms. Compton.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

3. Old Business

3.1 Nominations and elections of officers (per RCAC Bylaws Article IV)

Chair Clouser opened the floor for nominations.

3.1.1 Chair

Ms. Hearn nominated Dr. Clouser for Chair and he accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.

Dr. Sanders moved that the nominations cease, seconded by Ms. Compton.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously to elect Rodney Clouser as Chair for a term through the end of the next fiscal year (September 30, 2025).

3.1.2 Vice-Chair

Dr. Sanders nominated Micky McMillan for Vice Chair and she accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.

Mr. Nix moved that the nominations cease, seconded by Ms. Compton.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously to elect Micky McMillan Vice Chair for a term through the end of the next fiscal year (September 30, 2025).

4. New Business

4.1 Review and discussion of RCAC member positions listed in establishing Resolution

Mr. McMurry said that in September the County Commission discussed issues related to County advisory board participation, recognition, and vacancies, and asked the advisory boards for recommendations on hard-to-fill vacancies or any other issues. There was Committee discussion regarding current membership categories and criteria; issues related to the number of and potential for reducing member positions; current and potential methods of applicant recruitment; ensuring opportunities for diversity of members; and the County's definition of a quorum. Dr. Clouser said the Farm Bureau's role could be to encourage young farmers to participate in local government, including serving on the RCAC.

Dr. Sanders moved that the RCAC recommend that the County Commission delete the Alternate member position leaving 11 regular members only; seconded by Ms. Norman.

Following Committee discussion regarding issues related to member retention and attendance, Dr. Sanders withdrew the motion and Ms. Norman withdrew the second.

4.2 Discussion of RCAC 2025 meeting schedule

Chair Clouser asked if staff had any new information on the Agricultural Lands Protection Strategy citizen board. Mr. McMurry said that he talked to Andi Christman who advised that information would be shared as soon as it is ready. He said that the Property Appraiser staff is still committed to speaking on the agricultural assessment process at the January meeting.

There was discussion of potential topics for upcoming meetings, including hearing from the new Sheriff on rural issues and call trends, enforcement of overweight trucks and jurisdictional issues, the County's rural emergency response system, and technical issues with 911 false calls; update on the Florida Farm Bill; the Florida Dept. of Health assessment report for Alachua County; and updates on the County's 2025 state legislative delegation, Forward Focus initiative for eastern Alachua County, broadband grants, and Fire Rescue master planning efforts. There was also Committee discussion regarding the development of the County's Climate Action Plan, especially the Agriculture and Food Security, and Heat and Mental Health chapters; farmworker issues, including heat

protection, potential for deportation of immigrant workers at the federal and state levels, and any responses from Alachua County; hurricane debris cleanup; and reports of a potential music park near Melrose. Mr. McMurry said staff would begin following up on these topics for potential agenda items for 2025.

5. Approval of minutes for 10-15-2024 meeting

Motion was made by Ms. Van Scoik to approve the minutes for the 10-15-2024 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 that there are 3 applicants for 3 current vacancies that staff is preparing to take to the Board.

7. Chair Comments

There were no Chair comments.

8. Committee Members Comments

Vice Chair McMillan asked for a summary of the annual cycle of Committee activity. Chair Clouser said that the annual workplan and accomplishments report is completed in the fall and then presented to the County Commission in the spring. Mr. McMurry said that the Committee typically takes breaks in December and potentially November due to holidays and a month during the summer.

9. Public Comments

Marilyn Wimen said that the County has a lot of young farmers and that social media should be explored as a way to get younger people involved in the Committee. Mr. Nix said the Citizens Climate Advisory Board is making a recommendation to the County Commission for a position on that board for students aged 18-21.

10. Next Meeting

January 21st 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 5:46 pm.

APPROVED 01-21-2025