

**Rural Concerns Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

July 15, 2025

4:00 pm

Extension Auditorium

22712 W Newberry Road, Newberry, FL 32669

**1. Call to Order**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*In person:* Dr. Rodney Clouser (Chair), Lyman Conover, Janet Hearn, Micky McMillan (Vice Chair), Missy Norman, Dr. Cindy Sanders, Brent Weisman, Kelsey Waters

*Virtual:* Tyrone Johnson

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jacobi Bedenfield, John Nix, Amy Van Scoik

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner, Growth Management

Angeline Jacobs, Planner, Growth Management

Holly Banner, Zoning Administrator, Growth Management

**PUBLIC PRESENT:**

Garrett Schendovich

Luckee Limon

Kathleen Serino

Chair Clouser called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm. There were 8 members present in person, which was confirmed to satisfy the requirement for at least a quorum under County Advisory Board Guidelines, and 1 member present virtually. He said that members of the public present would have a chance to participate 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 Dr. Sanders to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Weisman.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

### **3. New Business**

#### **3.1 Proposed Changes to Alachua County Unified Land Development Code – Angeline Jacobs, Planner, Growth Management**

##### **3.1.1 Agritourism Substantial Offsite Impacts**

Ms. Jacobs gave a brief presentation including Florida Statutes definitions of agritourism and ecotourism activities. She said there are no current County regulations for Agritourism Substantial Offsite Impacts but Florida Statutes provides for their regulation by local governments. She said that public hearings for these draft amendments are tentatively planned for August 12<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup>.

There were questions and discussion from Committee members regarding the State statutes, their allowances for agritourism and relation to bona fide agriculture, and the relationship between local and state authority for determining bona fide agriculture. There were questions and discussion on the draft code language regarding allowing for access to private roads, alternative language for regulation of parking and traffic impacts, concerns regarding property owners' responsibility for a traffic impact study and roadway improvements, time ranges for lighting requirements, and regulation of noise. There was additional discussion regarding restaurants and the proposed requirements for and enforcement of utilization of agricultural products grown and processed onsite, regulation of restaurants for agritourism purposes and statutory preemptions, and the proposed requirements for public road access.

There were questions from members of the public regarding the proposed requirements for public road access and utilization of agricultural products grown and processed onsite, and negative impacts of nighttime lighting on crops and wildlife.

##### **3.1.2 Poultry on Single-family Parcels less than Five Acres**

Ms. Jacobs gave a brief presentation, including that this item is for poultry for personal use and not at commercial agricultural scales, the current County code standards, a comparison to other Florida jurisdictions, and a proposed new poultry definition. She said that the Board discussed this item on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and approved a motion, which she presented. She said that a request to the Board to advertise a public hearing for these draft amendments is tentatively planned for the end of August.

There were questions and discussion from Committee members regarding retaining current language on enclosed feed containers, the potential for poultry numbers exceeding personal use, adding "quail" to the proposed definition and allowing the full range of listed species on all parcels less than 5 acres outside the Urban Cluster, and prohibiting drakes (male ducks) in addition to roosters. There were questions from members of the public regarding allowing for additional poultry quantities based on individual review and differentiating laying vs non-laying hens.

Ms. Jacobs said staff would take today's comments into consideration in preparation of draft language for the Board.

**4. Approval of minutes for 05-20-2025 meeting**

Motion was made by Ms. Norman to approve the minutes for the 04-15-2025 meeting; seconded by Ms. Waters.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

**5. 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 all RCAC positions are currently filled but that the two position terms currently filled by Ms. Van Scoik and Chair Clouser will expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>. He said those upcoming vacancies would be posted soon and that current members are always welcome to reapply.

**6. Chair Comments**

Chair Clouser said that the RCAC annual workplan will be due in October. He encouraged members to review the current workplan before that for any suggested revisions.

**7. Staff Updates**

Mr. McMurry that there are currently no agenda topics scheduled for the August meeting. He said the Committee is not scheduled to meet in September and that for the October agenda, in addition to approval of the annual workplan, the RCAC annual elections of officers would also be scheduled.

He gave a summary of the current work on the Food Hub project being done by NVA consultants, including site visits for a potential facility and meetings with stakeholders and institutional buyers. He said all RCAC members should have received an email from NVA in the last month with an invitation to interview as a stakeholder and there was general confirmation that they had. Mr. Weisman and Ms. McMillan said they had each participated via a phone interview with NVA. There was discussion from Committee members regarding a Food Hub update for the August meeting, including information on the status of the current analysis, potential sites, involvement of local institutional buyers, and any projected effects on local producers.

Mr. McMurry also gave summaries of the current status of the County's Small Farmers Grant Program including the 2025 application cycle and recommended awards, an upcoming Agritourism Workshop in August at Cuscowilla Nature & Retreat Center, and a Countywide Farmers Market Survey Project that will begin in September. Dr. Sanders said that this is the last year that the Small Farmers Grant Program will be funded.

Mr. McMurry said that he had followed up with the County Attorney's Office regarding questions at the May RCAC meeting on whether members could communicate their priorities between meetings to staff who would send a summary to the Committee member representative attending the Food Hub focus group. He said that per the County Attorney's Office, such communication between members must occur in a publicly noticed meeting.

He said that on July 8<sup>th</sup> the Board appointed members to the new Agricultural Land Conservation Board and that RCAC member John Nix is one of the appointees. He said the new Senior Planner for that program has also been hired. Chair Clouser asked for clarification on the funding source for the Agricultural Land Conservation program; Mr. McMurry said he would get that information for the next meeting.

#### **8. Committee Members Comments**

Mr. Conover said that Florida Farm Bureau, UF/IFAS Center for Leadership, and the Mind Your Melon Foundation have released a survey on the mental health of Florida farmers. Mr. McMurry said he would send out a link to the survey to the Committee members. There was discussion of mental health issues in rural areas as a potential future meeting topic.

Ms. Norman asked about the status of the County Comprehensive Plan update and whether staff could provide relevant excerpts for RCAC review. Mr. Chumley said that there are upcoming County Commission workshops scheduled on August 12<sup>th</sup> on land use and development issues including the rural area, and September 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 7<sup>th</sup>, October 21<sup>st</sup>, and December 2<sup>nd</sup> with topics to be determined. He said staff would provide Plan excerpts to RCAC at the August meeting.

#### **9. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **10. Next Meeting**

Next Meeting – August 19<sup>th</sup> @ Health Dept.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Motion was made by Ms. Norman to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Conover.

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Clouser called the meeting to a close at 6:00 pm.

**Approved 08-19-2025**