

**HERNANDO COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY
JANUARY 3, 2007**

The meeting of the Hernando County Port Authority was held at the USCG Auxiliary Building, Wednesday, January 3, 2007, and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Acting Chairman Capt. Chuck Morton.

Members Present: Acting Chairman Capt. Chuck Morton, Mr. Roy Martin, and Capt. Dan McCann

Others Present: Charles "Pat" Fagan, Parks & Recreation Director, Roy Link, Parks & Waterways Maintenance Manager, Kent Weissinger, Assistant County Attorney, George Bennett, Waterways Maintenance Technician, Laurel Richardson, Operations Assistant, and Brandy Estridge, Administrative Secretary.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: December 6, 2006

Mr. Martin: Motion to approve. **Capt. McCann:** Second. Motion carried 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS - HERNANDO BEACH DREDGE

Capt. Morton advised that there was a good update at the December 2006 meeting and there is no new information. Mr. Fagan agreed and advised that the County is working to address a few Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) concerns.

Capt. McCann asked the status of purchasing the new barge. Mr. Link advised that Waterways went to Crystal River and obtained additional information for the Purchasing Department, such as the thickness of the aluminum. He advised that there is a possibility of doing two purchase orders and purchasing the barge from one vendor and the drill unit from another and have the County Fleet department put both units together.

Capt. McCann asked if the County has temporary buoys that can be used during the dredge. Mr. Bennett advised yes, they have 4 can buoys in stock. He also advised that it would not take much effort to install temporary markers on metal poles if needed.

STATE ROAD CANAL PROJECT

Mr. Fagan advised that the Department of Environmental Protection had a few questions that needed to be answered.

Mr. Fagan advised that he will be having a meeting with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on January 19, 2007, and different capital projects will be discussed. He advised that he would bring up the concerns of the small dredging projects and the funding issues. Mr. Martin asked if it would help to have a letter signed by the Port Authority indicating that this is also a concern of the Port Authority and the residents of the community? Mr. Fagan advised yes, it would be nice to have a letter from the Port Authority and the residents of the canals requesting assistance with the future planning. Mr. Martin requested Mrs. Estridge to draft the letter for the Port Authority's signature.

BAY LAKE

Mr. Roger Davidson advised that the aerator is doing fine in Bay Lake but the hydrilla is going crazy due to the low tides and the warm weather. He asked if he should get his neighbors together to send Mr. Fagan or the County Commissioners a letter regarding water body concerns. Mr. Fagan advised that it would not hurt to have something on record.

Capt. Morton advised that when you address the Commissioners you want to indicate your particular area of concern.

DRAFT ORDINANCE

Mr. Weissinger advised that he really does not have any new information on the draft ordinance. He stated that the next step would be to discuss this at a workshop with the BOCC, which has not been set yet. He stated that he needs direction from the BOCC to see which direction they want to go.

Mr. Weissinger advised that the concepts of this ordinance were presented to the public at the December Port Authority meeting and at this point he wants to present these concepts to the BOCC and see what direction we get. Mr. Weissinger stated that he does not expect any significant changes with dock variance issues, but the County may look at small setback requirements. He stated that he thinks one thing that needs to be looked at is the issue of structures such as elevated structures and boathouses.

KAYAK TRAILS

Doug Alderson, Florida Circumnavigation Saltwater Paddling Trails, advised that this is a 1500 mile trail that will go around the entire coast of Florida from Pensacola to Key West, then up to the Georgia Boarder on the east coast. He stated that he is currently scouting the southern part of this trail south of Crystal River, which is part of section 7, which starts at Yankeetown and goes down to Anclote Key State Park.

Mr. Alderson advised that his biggest challenge is locating campsites or motels spaced no more than 15 miles apart. He indicated that kayaking is one of the fastest growing outdoor sports and it has become very popular with all segments of the population. He stated that he thinks this trail will be very popular in Hernando County because of the nature coast and a lot of undeveloped areas, public lands, the wildlife refuges, state preserves, state parks, and amenities where people can kayak up to towns to get supplies, camp, or get a motel. This area is also not as crowded as areas in south Florida.

Mr. Alderson said that if a kayaker is looking for the amenities of the smaller towns mixed with the unspoiled coastline, then Hernando County is an ideal place to kayak. He said that there will be a lot of day trippers but there will also be weekenders who are looking for 2 or 3 days to kayak and a few people will want to do the entire trail.

Mr. Alderson advised that the trail is currently half finished and 10 out of 26 segments are on the website where people can download maps and do these segments right now. The entire trail will be open in about a year and a half. He stated that if anyone has anything in mind or any information about future campsites he would like to know. He stated that there is a pretty long stretch from Homosassa to Hernando County that camping and motels are needed.

Mr. Bennett asked if the trails will be marked. Mr. Alderson advised no, you will need good maps with a GPS unit. The idea of placing signs is high maintenance, expensive, and there are a lot of regulations. He stated that occasionally they like to place signs at some of the campsites, especially public lands.

Mr. Martin stated that camping at Bayport could be a possibility if SWFWMD would agree

to it. Capt. Morton stated that another possibility would be to allow a few people to camp inside the finger at Linda Pedersen Park. He stated that this is a highly underutilized area. He stated that the problem with Bayport would be historical significance. Mr. Alderson advised that the trails campsites are usually for no more than 8 people. Kayakers normally don't like to go in large groups typically 3 to 4 kayakers would be the max. Capt. Morton stated that these spaces could be done by reservation so you have control over the situation.

Mr. Alderson advised that a lot of counties are putting out their own blueways guides for paddling. From Pinellas down counties have developed their own guides or they are in development, which helps compliment what the FL Trail has been doing.

NEW BUSINESS – REEF CONFERENCE UPDATE

Capt. Morton advised that he attended the Reef Conference in Sarasota and a lot of the information provided was the affect of red tide on the reefs. He stated that Hernando County really did not feel the affect of red tide. He stated that we know that red tide is a toxin and causes distress but after the phytoplankton dies the poisonous toxin settles and as you go further south you look at a reef and from 6 feet down everything is dead because of the toxins that have settled there. Mr. Martin advised that this is actually a spore that looks like a cannon ball and it drops to the bottom. He stated that nothing may happen for a million years but then all of a sudden the conditions get right and up she blooms again.

Capt. Morton advised that fish kills have been reported as early as the 1530's and it has been documented after 1844. In the 1950's they figured out that even if red tide went away the toxins remained.

Capt. Morton advised that scallops are very susceptible to red tide, so are oysters and clams but to a lower extent. He stated that snook apparently come in on the reefs and hang out till July then normally take off, but they were still hanging around in October. These snook would hang out above the reef and not go below the layer with the toxins.

Mr. Knotts stated that he can't believe that the dumping of the phosphate in the Gulf would not have an affect on this. Mr. Martin replied that this would not have an affect, the east coast also has red tide and it has nothing to do with phosphate. He stated that they think the amount of iron in the water at a particular time has an affect. He stated that a woman named Karen at the Florida Institute has been studying red tide for the last 35 years and the Institute has been unable to produce this in a lab.

Capt. Morton advised that there is a new reef structure on the market. It's constructed by Walter Marine and they are involved in mitigation exercises, should Hernando County need to mitigate anything. He stated that this structure is about 8 feet tall and it is a triangular structure and it is made with concrete and embedded Florida limestone. This company has their own deployment system and the large 8-foot units cost \$1,000 each deployed and they have a smaller unit.

Capt. Morton stated that if Mr. Gregg Sutton is given the opportunity to open a reef permit with the Hernando Beach Dredge project then he should take it.

Mr. Link advised that several years back construction companies were offering to donate material for reef use. He stated that the problem was that a major site was needed to stockpile the material and you need the information on the material that will be used before

you can apply for a permit. Mr. Link stated that it would be nice if you could start applying for the permit before stockpiling the material. Capt. Morton stated that the back part of the Landfill could be use for the stockpile of material.

Mr. Fagan stated that you might want to let Mr. Sutton know reefs could be an option for him to consider for mitigation.

WHAT TO DO WITH A DEAD DOLPHIN OR MARINE MAMAL

Capt. Morton advised that he had the unfortunate circumstance of going out and coming across a dead dolphin. He stated that he called this in to the USCG and they referred him to FWC, who referred him to NOAA. He advised that NOAA handles these types of issues. He stated that they told him they would get a hold of him in 15 minutes and an hour later they called him back and asked if he could tow the dolphin in.

Capt. Morton towed it in to Bayport and around 7:00 p.m. two women in a ¾ ton pick up with no load boards, wench, or lifts arrived. He stated that their comments were that this is bigger than a pup. Fortunately, citizens helped lift the dolphin to the boat ramp and Capt. Morton's son brought a lowboy trailer, which was able to bring the dolphin up to the truck. He stated that since this incident, he has prepared a trailer that can go in the water and load a dolphin or manatee without all of the manpower. The women from NOAA took the dolphin to Clearwater and they found that it apparently died of old age.

Calls for injured marine mammals can re routed through the FWC and more than likely they will be taken to one of the zoos.

OPEN BOARD POSITION

Capt. Morton advised that there is one open Port Authority Board position and it will be re-advertised. Mr. Fagan advised that the BOCC will authorize the re-advertisement of this position at the January 9, 2007 meeting.

BOARD & STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Fagan advised that he spoke with Al Toler, Construction Foreman, and a few minor changes had to be made to the Bayport master plan. It has been resubmitted to the Building Department and the project is going through the review process right now and it looks like this project could go out for bids.

Mr. Fagan congratulated Mrs. Estridge for applying for and receiving the Florida Boating Improvement Program Boater Education Grant for the update and reprinting of the Hernando County Waterways Brochure.

Mr. Fagan advised that the Linda Pedersen Bridge is in place but the handrails and the gate still need to be installed. This work should be completed shortly and this bridge will allow the public better access to this facility. He stated that he believes a lot more functions will be held at this park because of the bridge.

Mr. McCann asked if the County has ever had monofilament recycling bins at the boat ramps. Mr. Link advised that there is one located at Bayport and he is not sure about Jenkins Creek. He advised that a volunteer group installed them a while back. Mr. McCann advised that he believes that the Florida Fish and Wildlife gives these bins out and he would like the County to look into getting additional bins.

Mr. Martin advised Mr. Weissinger that he would like to take a better look at the Comprehensive Plan as it pertains to waterways and the functions of the Port Authority Board. He requested a paper copy of chapter 9.

OPERATIONS REVIEW – December 2006

Mr. Link passed around pictures of a palm tree that was leaning over the dock at Rogers Park and re-planted on the beach area. He also passed around pictures of a commercial operation on Calienta Drive that has contamination runoff. Mr. Link advised that Waterways turned this issue over to both Code Enforcement and the Health Department.

Mr. Link – Trimmed numerous trees along the Weeki Wachee River, yard and office work, cleaned the Hernando Beach Boat Ramp restrooms, truck and boat maintenance, miscellaneous navigational aid maintenance, material and parts inventory and pick up, located the pump the shrimpers borrowed, toured the Newport Drive site, which was determined to not be a hazard to navigation or the neighbors, field inspection of Hunter's Lake, contacted the Sheriff's Department regarding equipment parked at Mountain Lake, installed 3 buoys at the tank reefs, and installed signs at Hunters Lake. Staff completed 13 service requests and reviewed 17 permit applications.

PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Jerry Lawson advised that he lives off of the Weeki Wachee River and he is concerned with the State Road Canal Dredging Project. He asked to be taken through the process and what needs to happen for this project to get done. Mr. Fagan advised that the permit has been applied for and FEDINC met with DEP to go over various issues of concern. Once the permit is approved, there is a five-year span of time when the project can be completed.

Mr. Fagan advised that funding will be a big issue, but the Commissioners will be advised to give them a better understanding for the future that money needs to be allocated in Capital Improvements for this purpose.

Mr. Lawson asked what happens after DEP approval. Will someone write a scope of work for this project? Mr. Fagan advised yes, FEDINC will handle the necessary scope of work. Mr. Link advised that there will be two possible methods of removal. The first is a dragline off of Shoal Line Boulevard the equipment would go over the trees but staff does not recommend this method. The other method that staff recommends is a pontoon type dredge and barge that will dig the material and place it on the barge and haul it to Rogers Park where a temporary disposal site will be set up. This material will then be hauled to Linda Pedersen Park and eventually used at the County Parks after dewatering.

Mr. Lawson asked if the report indicated how many cubic yards of material will be removed. Mr. Fagan advised that the County has information on file dated October 27, 2006 with the total estimated project cost of \$81,500, which amounts to \$42.90 per cubic yard and removal of 1900 cubic yards of material.

Mr. Gary Klesius advised that he has a house on Circle Drive that is affected by State Road Canal. He asked for the steps as a homeowner and whom he needs to contact at the County Commission to encourage them to consider funding of this project. Mr. Fagan advised that it is always good to send letters and have them on file in the correspondence to note.

Mr. Jim Knotts thanked Mr. Link and his crew for the work they have done on the Weeki Wachee River. He advised that the river is getting overgrown again and there are corners that you can get hung up in. He asked if staff could try and find time to clean up this area again.

Ms. Fran Baird asked the status of the light and the painting of the Hernando Beach Water Tower. Mr. Bennett advised that he is waiting for information from a tower company regarding a new light system for the tower. Mr. Fagan advised that there is money in the budget for the painting of the tower. Ms. Baird asked if Welcome to Hernando Beach could be painted on the tower? Mr. Fagan advised that this could be an option but the County would have to see the difference in the cost. Mr. Baird advised that if this is possible and additional funds were needed then people might be willing to help raise the additional funds.

Mr. Roger Davidson asked if there is any concern about the number of canoe places on the River. He advised that a lot of places seem to be popping up. He stated that he is not talking about eliminating anything he is just curious if there are any rules. Mr. Weissinger advised that Ichetucknee is a different situation because it is almost an entirely state owned park. The Weeki Wachee has a lot of SWFWMD and private property along the river and it would be harder to exercise a certain amount of control on the Weeki Wachee River. Mr. Davidson stated that he is not talking about limiting the number of boats but controlling the number of vendors. Mr. Weissinger stated that he understands Mr. Davidson's concerns but he is not sure how to regulate the number of businesses if they have access by private property to the river.

Mr. Knotts asked if a business could operate and come out of Rogers Park. He stated that he understands the canoe people did this a while back. Mr. Fagan advised that the County has some issues that will need to be addressed in the near future. Mr. Fagan advised that he does not want boat or canoe rentals out of Rogers Park. Mr. Weissinger stated that the County has the ability to regulate the use of County owned facilities.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Martin: Motion to adjourn. **Capt. McCann:** Second. Motion carried 3-0.
The meeting of the Hernando County Port Authority ended at 8:20 p.m.