

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
AT LARGE COMMISSIONERS MEETING – GOAL SETTING  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR, MANATEE ROOM  
1112 Manatee Avenue West  
BRADENTON, Florida  
JANUARY 22, 2021**

Present were:

George Kruse, First Vice-Chairman  
Carol Whitmore  
Kevin Van Ostenbridge, Second Vice-Chairman (entered during meeting)

Also present were:

Cheri Coryea, County Administrator  
Jan Brewer, Financial Management Director  
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court

 Commissioner Whitmore called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

 Commissioner Whitmore stated she asked for this meeting to have more time to speak with Commissioner Kruse regarding their goals for the future of Manatee County.

Commissioner Whitmore asked for assistance with a citizen who needs help with her disabled child and housing.

 Commissioner Whitmore provided her background in health care, and stated she is interested in social service programs, animal welfare, wildlife, and the animal shelter. She addressed affordable housing and requested Commissioner Kruse's interests.

 Commissioner Kruse explained his focus is affordable housing. He was involved in an affordable housing fund, where tax credits are used to underwrite housing projects and to help with financing. The builder is asked to provide an application stating how long the project will be affordable, and the equity is provided by the government. The developer will sell the credits, and that money is used to build the project. Commissioner Kruse attends several affordable housing Board and committees and he continued to explain the process. Manatee County does not have a Community Land Trust, and the property as part of a trust needs to be large enough to provide affordable housing. It is best to work with a developer who has land. At least 20 to 25 percent of the value of a home is the land. A Community Land Trust works in that the homeowner does not own the land the house is built on, but leases it from the Trust. Homes can have lower purchase prices, and a lease is signed with the owner for a low amount. A lien will be put on the property if the lease is not paid. Anyone can propose a Community Land Trust, but a Board can push things through faster and partner with a developer. Commissioner Kruse has spoken informally with developers, and explained that the catch with any type of attainable housing, is that the lower the land cost, there is less infrastructure, including transportation opportunities. (Enter Commissioner Van Ostenbridge at 8:18 a.m.)

Upon Commissioner Van Ostenbridge's arrival, Commissioner Whitmore noted the meeting was between Commissioner Kruse and herself.

 Discussion ensued regarding potential properties including the DeSoto Mall property, and land use options.

 Commissioner Kruse stated his focus is on a larger picture including affordable housing, charter government, greenways and trails, and improving the quality of life in Manatee County.

 Discussion continued regarding the focus of At-Large Commissioners, keep attention on global issues, non-paved infrastructure, to keep a perspective on countywide issues, unemployment, suggested meeting with Karen Stewart, being familiar with CARES Act funding and it is difficult to get all the required information to approve the applications, staff is being spread thin due to COVID-19 issues, citizen emails regarding CARES Act funds, importance of getting jobs on the street, people are underemployed, benchmark for unemployment is around five percent for the State, jobs are opening back up, and economy is cyclical.

 Commissioner Kruse continued to discuss the economy and specific industries in Manatee County that need to be diversified, and the importance of getting companies to move to Manatee County, but there has to be a workforce. There is also a need to protect the land around the Port, and the ability to get more manufacturing jobs. Manatee Technical College will build a program to train workers for specific industries.

 Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, stated an economic development project is scheduled for the future, and the County funds some external work for the Economic Development Council.

 Commissioner Kruse will tour the Southwest District later this morning to learn more about the area, and options to provide incentives to businesses in that area. He suggested creating smaller districts within the Southwest District to encourage using benefits provided in each specific area.

 Discussion continued regarding the Southwest Tax Increment Fund (TIF), street lighting in specific areas, lower income areas that are in need of infrastructure, and improvements in Rubonia.

 Ms. Coryea explained a plan was funded for Rubonia to meet Housing and Urban Development required to get additional funds, and the County is also partnering with SWFWMD to help with the project. The Board adopts specific Community plans to help assist bringing in additional monies.

Discussion took place regarding the intent of the TIF, impact fee credits, public/private partnerships, Commissioner Kruse has meetings with the hospitals, indigent care providers, Low Income Pool funding, listen to the public, but make your own decisions, and Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Commissioner Van Ostenbridge acknowledged he received a briefing on the CIP.

 Commissioner Kruse addressed impact fees and the purpose of collecting them, if only a small percentage is being collected, it is important to weigh the improvements being made, impact fees are only paid by a small group of people, seek different options for funding, and charge minor dollars among all home sales to get the same amount as impact fees. The Real Estate market is up, and all property sales pay documentary stamps, which all go the State.

 Discussion occurred regarding legislation that could be introduced so counties can take advantage of Documentary Stamps collected on real estate sales, developments effect the immediate area and impact fees are used for those specific areas, but improvements are needed countywide, and there is a need for a broader base funding source.

 Jan Brewer, Financial Management Director, responded that Florida Statutes allow Counties the ability to levy a tax for whatever they need.

 Ms. Coryea clarified Documentary Stamps collected by the State are used to help assist with State Housing initiatives.

 Discussion ensued regarding the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund, County funds go into the fund, but are not provided back to the County, allow counties to add onto their Documentary Stamps to help fund projects, and take that ability away from the State.

 Commissioner Whitmore expressed her thoughts regarding stormwater fees.

Commissioner Van Ostenbridge acknowledged that if an At-Large Commissioner receives correspondence regarding his district, that Commissioner can ask the person to respond to the District Commissioner.

 Commissioner Whitmore distributed an email from Clarke Davis, Transportation Planning Division Manager regarding the CIP.

BC20210122DOC001

Discussion continued that there is a need to review the projects in the CIP, ensure the State has their portion of the funding for basin studies prior to doing the study, and a follow up will be done with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).

 Ms. Coryea noted that she will contact the SWFWMD representative, Dennis Regosta, regarding funding for basin studies.

 Commissioner Whitmore explained she does not want to raise property taxes, and noted there could be ways to raise funding. She suggested a line item on the budget

 Ms. Brewer explained there are several line items in the Budget, and money stays within those funds.

 Commissioner Kruse reiterated getting to a base for dedicated funds, use some of the general funds to go to various specific funds, how Sarasota County breaks down their taxes with a lower millage, but has separate line items for specific purposes, including healthcare and affordable housing.

 Following discussion, Ms. Brewer reviewed healthcare costs that the County is required to pay.

 Commissioner Whitmore continued to discuss the need for specific funds and dedicated millage for those funds. She offered to forward items of interest to Commissioner Kruse.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of emails Commissioners receive addressed to themselves, compared to those addressed to all Commissioners.

 Commissioner Van Ostenbridge commented on the percentage of emails addressed to himself.

 Discussion continued regarding the At-Large Commissioners can assist the District Commissioners, the need to respond to citizen concerns, helpful for District Commissioners to meet

with At-Large Commissioners in a similar forum as today, hold weekly work sessions, Government in the Sunshine, Commissioner Comment section in meetings, and if that is the right forum to discuss lengthy topics.

 Commissioner Van Ostenbridge initially agreed to a possible meeting with the At-Large Commissioners, but then noted he would need time to respond.

 Ms. Coryea explained there are briefings scheduled with Commissioners regarding the budget, and a pre-budget work session is scheduled in February. The notes from individual meetings will be provided to all Commissioners.

 Discussion continued regarding animal issues, upcoming work sessions, request information from Commissioners regarding the different committees they serve on and what the topics of discussion are, and submit agendas from committee meetings for all Commissioners to view.

 Ms. Coryea explained there is a process for staff to provide notes from additional Committee/Board meetings, and these will be made available to Commissioners.

There being no public comment, Commissioner Whitmore closed public comment.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Commissioner Whitmore adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Minutes Approved: February 9, 2021