



**Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials
Water Quality Subcommittee Minutes
Meeting of February 4, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER - 8:45 A.M.

The Volusia Room of Daytona Beach International Airport, 800 Catalina Drive, Daytona Beach, Florida.

Water Quality Subcommittee members attending included: Doug Daniels, Subcommittee Chairman and Volusia County Council Member; Mayor Tom Laputka, City of Orange City; Mayor Allen Green, City of Port Orange; Mayor Doug Gibson, City of Oak Hill; and Mayor Michael Ignasiak, City of Edgewater.

Others attending were Mayor Bob Apgar, City of DeLand; Mayor John Masiarczyk, City of Deltona; Tom Abraham, Orange City Commissioner, District 3; Jake Sachs, New Smyrna Beach City Commissioner, Zone 2; Heidi Herzberg, Deltona City Commissioner, District 3; John Dillard, South Daytona Community Development Director; Mary Anne Connors, Volusia County Deputy County Manager; Kelli McGee, Volusia County Growth and Resource Management Department Director; and Tom Carey, Volusia County Environmental Management Pollution Control Manager. Debbie Kelley with the County Manager's Office took minutes.

WELCOME

Mr. Daniels welcomed those attending. Introductions were made.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Daniels said Volusia County staff had been working on a water plan that would be presented at the Volusia County Council meeting on Thursday, February 5. Water conditions in the community were deplorable. Discharges of stormwater, fertilizer and various forms of wastewater were polluting the waterways. Volusia County government last year had adopted a very strict ordinance regulating the use of fertilizers. Similar fertilizer ordinances had been adopted in other Florida counties, and it was making a tremendous difference. Educating residents about the issue was one of the best ways to enforce the ordinance, along with talking to fertilizer manufacturers and landscaping/maintenance companies.

Deputy County Manager Connors spoke about the Council's Water Quality Workshop in June, 2014. The focus had been on the Halifax River and the County's natural springs. Presentations on water quality were planned for the County Council meetings on February 5 and 19th. No one was sure where funding would come from to improve the County's water quality, and the need for improvements was staggering.

There were many enclaves throughout the County with septic systems, with the worst areas in Mosquito Lagoon, Edgewater, Oak Hill, the North Peninsula, and Wilbur-by-the-Sea. Septic tanks in West Volusia affected Gemini Springs and Blue Spring. It was going to be a challenge for local governments without local funding looking for local partners to help pay for improvements. In many areas, the property was not valuable. The most direct partnership approach would be a Reasonable Assurance Plan, which involved local partners developing plans and presenting them to the State for consideration. Local partners would have to pool funds to make this happen.

Discussion on water quality at the County Council's February 5 meeting was expected to include stormwater, updating basin studies, capital projects, Reasonable Assurance Plans, wastewater discharge, and education on the use of fertilizers. Ms. Connors said she had met with the College Consortium, which had colleges with water programs that were eager to work with the County and Volusia municipalities. The colleges could help perform research to find the best investments. The current basin study was very broad and from the 1990s. There had been a great deal of development since that time and the study was considered obsolete.

Discussion continued among Ms. Connors, Mr. Daniels, Port Orange Mayor Green, DeLand Mayor Apgar, Edgewater Mayor Ignasiak, and Deltona Mayor Masiarczyk about the areas of greatest impact, development along Nova Road, the worst septic system areas, basin studies, the cost to retrofit septic systems and the cost of installing sewer lines. Many people didn't want or couldn't afford to connect to a central sewer system. It was suggested that tests and regular inspections be done on septic systems. Even the best septic systems regardless of their age did not treat for nitrogen.

There was discussion among Mr. Daniels, Ms. Connors, Mayor Apgar, Mayor Green, Oak Hill Mayor Gibson, and County Growth and Resource Management Department Director McGee regarding information from Florida Senator David Simmons pertaining to the lower septic system discharge in Europe, the cost of retrofitting septic systems with membranes, the high cost of installing and maintaining aerobic septic systems, different priorities among the cities, and requiring recreational vehicle parks located near water to provide water and sewer connections.

The discussion turned to types of funding, where to start and how to obtain it. No County could afford to fund the necessary changes and improvements that were needed. Help was needed from the State and Federal governments as well as the private sector. Volusia County had many environmental issues which should be addressed as quickly as possible. It was felt Volusia County needed a very restrictive septic system ordinance, especially with the increase in development. State laws provided for wastewater service, a major investment for developments. Mandates were discussed; the problem with unfunded mandates was that they were not affordable.

The consensus among those present was the County and all Volusia municipalities should jointly prepare a resolution as quickly as possible stating what the group wanted to accomplish. It would be sent to the State and should include areas of economic development. Through a land acquisition process (Volusia Forever), the County had spent more than 20 years buying land to preserve water resources. The group agreed the County would prepare a draft resolution to be reviewed by the County Attorney's Office and presented for review at the next meeting of the Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials on Monday, February 9, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.