
Guest Speaker: Palmer Panton; Planning & Development Services Director

Minutes: Caroline Newby

Coffee and donuts were served.

The meeting was called to order by Bill Hester at 8:05AM. Invocation given by Bill Hester. Pledge led by Dennis Mudge.

Bill Hester opened the meeting with introductions of staff and guests then gave an announcement of the passing of Committee Member Robert Gast, a longtime member of the Volusia County Fair, Volusia County Farm Bureau and Farmer’s Market.

The August 22, 2017 minutes were reviewed, Gerald Fieser moved to approve them, seconded by Saundra Gray. Motion Carried.

Dennis Mudge explained the purpose of the meeting, Sub-Committees and their roles in Agriculture. He also spoke on how the Council wants to be acquainted with each committee and would like representatives of the different commodities on the committees. The council votes to add New Members. These meetings are open to the public, all issues go direct to the Council, at large members are appointed by the Council.

Bill Hester opened the topic of the meeting with Coyotes and how their presence can be a problem. It was suggested that this matter should be addressed at a special meeting. Sharon Fox Gamble headed another meeting on the coyote issue. Dennis Mudge spoke on his experience as an agent in the north east with the Fish & Wildlife Agency. He explained how ranchers, farmers and residents of communities have had the wrong perception of the temperament of the coyote. These animals act like raccoons in urban environment, are very smart and adaptable to their environment. The State seems to agree with the Committee on the possible danger and destruction these animals can cause. Bill Hester asked if the committee wants to get involved at this point or wait to call a public meeting on the coyote issue.

Gerald Fieser asked where the complaints are generated and stated it is an ongoing problem that needs to be brought to the Council’s attention along with the Fish & Wildlife Agency to discuss monitoring and control. Ronnie Hull said he hears complaints from all sectors; urban communities, farmers, ranchers and home owners. David Griffis explained that special breeds of dogs and donkeys seem to be good coyote deterrents.
Alexander Penalta discussed some Animal Rights issues that may come up as a result of the coyote issue.

Greg Akins moved to have a meeting on the animal issue, seconded by Gerald Fieser; motion carried.

Bill Hester introduced the Guest Speaker Mr. Palmer Panton to the committee members.

Mr. Panton spoke on such issues as the truck stop and auto mall proposals in the area and how the City of DeLand is questioning the auto mall development.

Another issue Mr. Panton discussed was the alternate use of farm properties and how the property owners are and will convert certain areas of their property and or buildings for other income producing uses. One of the issues is knowing what the property will be used for in order to properly and fairly create the zoning for those purposes. At this time Volusia County does not have strong enforcement on venue use on farms. Converting barns for venue use negates agriculture status unless there are farm animals there.

Gerald Fieser spoke about the need to find other uses for farm property and building to bring in an income and maintain green space property and possibly renting spaces for RVs and campers. He spoke about the Smart Growth program.

Bernie LeFils spoke about the DOT and the ramp change and the developing of solar farms as an alternate revenue stream.

David Griffis spoke about the 100 acre Solar Farm substation.

Next topic was addressed by Gerald Fieser on water quality and how AG in Deleon Springs is being blamed for the degradation of water quality. He feels the numbers just don’t add up and should be looked at. We need recommendations for zoning and classifications on AG land and it needs to go to Council.

Gerald Fieser moved to ask County Council to review land use for AG, seconded by Greg Akin; motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss at this time the meeting was adjourned.