

SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

May 15, 2017

The South Florida Regional Planning Council's Executive Committee met on this date at its corporate office at 3440 Hollywood Boulevard, Suite 140, Hollywood, FL 33021. Chair Daubert called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**I. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**

Councilmember Patricia Asseff  
Councilmember Frank Caplan  
Councilmember Daniella Levine Cava (via phone)  
Chair Tim Daubert  
Councilmember Greg Ross  
Councilmember Sandra Walters (via phone)  
Councilmember Jimmy Weekley (via phone)

Isabel Cosio Carballo, Executive Director, and Sam Goren, Legal Counsel, were present.

There were no Ex-Officio Members present.

Sam Goren, Legal Counsel, stated this meeting was legally and properly publicized and there is a physical quorum.

**II. Approval of Council Agenda**

Councilmember Asseff moved to approve the Agenda. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous vote.

**III. Review and discussion of the Council's finances in advance of the June 8<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning Retreat**

Ms. Cosio Carballo explained in detail the use and timeline of the Counties' Membership Dues, in-coming payments, outstanding invoices, and the challenges this creates in rebuilding the Council. The Council's business model needs to be rethought. This is where the Strategic Planning Retreat comes in. The Strategic Planning Retreat will help guide the Council's future regarding its value, embracing new changes in productivity, and finding a broader financial base. There was discussion about the lack of State funding that had previously been appropriated, traditional review activities the Council continues to maintain but is not compensated for (Comprehensive Plan Reviews, and Intergovernmental Coordination Review Process), and whether the Council is statutorily required to continue expending Council resources to review these items. Legal Counsel will review the matter. It was mentioned that the counties and municipalities rely on the Council for reviewing their amendments.

René Gonzalez, Finance Director, explained in detail the Financial Report for the months of January through April 2017. The Councilmembers stated they liked the format of having the four months

comparison on one page. He further described the cash situation, account receivables, and other items on the Balance Sheet. The timelines of invoices and payment methods were also explained.

Manny Cela, Deputy Director, referred to the spreadsheet that was provided. He explained in detail the various projects, contract details, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO) grant-funded employees contract, administrative fees, pass through funds, and the various payment timelines. He reminded the Council that the PBSO employees' pay is included in the payroll figures. The PBSO contract monies are considered pass-through funds with a 10% administrative fee. Mr. Cela explained that some contracts are purely cost reimbursement and require specific information (copies of timesheets, expenditures, reimbursements, etc.) for invoicing purposes.

Ms. Cosio Carballo updated the Councilmembers on the Revolving Loan Fund's (RLF) contract with Economic Development Administration (EDA). Mr. Cela explained the history of the RLF, the various RLF programs, billing, administrative costs, interest and fees, and the revenue and reinvestment of the funds. Ms. Cosio Carballo reminded the Council that the RLF was originally designed to help those businesses that were rejected by traditional lending institutions. She is working with EDA regarding lending qualifications and "gap financing" (bank referrals) that would enable the Council to further economic development and job creation activities while reducing loan fund risks. Councilmember Asseff stated that this will change the structure of the RLF. Mr. Goren explained the collection aspect of the RLF. The history of the loan fund and its inheritance of nonperforming revolving loan fund portfolios as part of its creation were discussed. There was an inquiry to research the possibility of selling some of the loans to provide revenue for the Council.

Ms. Cosio Carballo announced that Juan Rojas will be the new Loan Program Manager, a former banker who has relationships with other lending institutions. He will be hired as a contract employee.

Councilmember Ross suggested we focus on programs that will help the Council financially and find a better method of billing, accounting, and collections. One of the ways the Council has cut costs this past year is by not replacing various positions and reducing travel expenses. The Council needs to have a business model that generates revenue. In the past, the Council was awarded a \$4.5 million Sustainable Communities Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This grant provided funding and cash flow to the Agency for several years as grant funds cycled through the Council. The Southeast Florida Clean Cities Coalition was also granted substantial funding. There was some discussion on the retreat cost. The retreat will be used to guide the Councilmembers on a new vision and focus on the Council's future. "Keep it simple, you limit your focus – you limit your expenses" commented Councilmember Ross and focus on what is profitable.

Councilmember Walters suggested the Councilmembers can gain knowledge from the Florida Regional Council Association's Retreat. The issues are the same as the other Regional Councils. There were suggestions that the Council offer their services to contract or create Local Agreements (LA) with municipalities / counties / agencies / entities for reviewing large scale developments (previously Development of Regional Impact), or as a consultant in other areas (transportation). The Council should consider charging a fee for services rendered. If the contract or LA is documented properly there should not be a conflict of interest. There was discussion on the time that is deployed in reviewing Comprehensive Plan items without compensation. Most people do not know the extent of the Council's economic

development activities. Many focus on the Council's planning activities due to the word "planning" in our corporate name. There was discussion on the Council getting involved in dispute resolution / mediation. It was noted that the Council offered this in the past. Now, because of financial issues, someone would have to be contracted to fulfill this position. This was the one of the original reasons for creating the Institute for Community Collaboration. It was suggested this discussion be continued at the retreat.

Mr. Cela explained that reimbursements vary (monthly, quarterly, after deliverables are received or project completed). Discussion ensued regarding the staff hours worked on projects and whether the time charged has been over the contract allotment. He explained that some contracts are staff-hour specific, and what happens when the time charged is over or under the contract amount. The negotiation of contracts was mentioned and discussed – some of those contracts are negotiable, some are not.

There was discussion on the cost of rent, negotiating the existing lease, reducing the current office space, subleasing part of the office, subleasing part of the office as a satellite office for another entity, moving to another building in the complex, renting at another location (governmental centers, college locations), and possibility purchasing a building. Presently the cost of this office is approximately \$15/square foot including utilities for Class A building space. The Council's central location, not too far north, south, east, or west, with easy access to I-95 and the Turnpike, is important so that the Council is easily accessible and not viewed as a county-specific organization instead of a regional organization. Travel for all Councilmembers is another concern.

Mr. Gonzalez reviewed the second part of the Financial Report. He explained in detail the Annual Budget and percentages, the RLF Program funding and expenses, the adding of the four month comparison, as well as the other expenses in the Report. The "Note: Year to date through represents 58% of the year" was explained in detail. Overall operating expenses are on track at 57% of the budget as compared to the portion of the year lapsed. Mr. Gonzalez offered an idea for verifying the address data base maintained by the State of Florida for a fee since most cities do not have the resources to do it. A GIS system would be needed to verify the information. Mr. Goren explained the fluctuations regarding the legal expenses (monthly retainer, general matters, and for the record a dispute engagement with the former finance director which is being covered by the insurance defense counsel and partially by Mr. Goren's partner). Mr. Goren and his firm has been part of the Council since 1982.

#### **VIII. Councilmember Comments**

With the financial discussion completed, Councilmember Cava suggested that the Councilmembers be briefed on the seagrass problem in the Biscayne Bay at one of the Council Meetings. This is a regional matter. Councilmember Cava is not sure if this discussion can be ready for the June Meeting. Councilmember Walters stated the Keys and Florida Bay have the largest sea grass population. There are experts available to participate and be part of the discussion.

#### **VII. Public Comments – none**

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 p.m.

This signature is to attest that the undersigned is the Secretary of the SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL, and that the information provided herein is the true and correct minutes for the May 15, 2017 meeting of the SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE adopted the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2017.

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Daniella Levine Cava, Secretary

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Date