

JOINT WATER ADVISORY BOARD/TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING
May 13, 2022
Minutes

A joint meeting of the Broward County Water Advisory Board and Technical Advisory Committee was held at Broward County Government Center, 115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 430, Fort Lauderdale, FL on May 13, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

(The WAB/TAC meeting minutes were summarized by Adrienne Aiken. Copies of the presentations are filed with the supplemental papers of the meeting.)

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call – Water Advisory Board (WAB)

Roll call was taken by the minutes secretary. A quorum was not present, and the record of attendance follows:

WAB MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Steve Geller, Chair
Vice Mayor Sandra Welch, Vice Chair
Commissioner Doug Bell
Commissioner Denise Grant
Commissioner Kevin Biederman
Commissioner Nancy Metayer
Councilmember Jim Allbritton
Councilmember Susan Starkey
Gene Goldman
Kevin Hart, TAC Chair
Mark Peterson
Mayor Greg Ross
Mayor Michelle J. Gomez
Vice Mayor Anthony Caggiano
Vice Mayor Aisha Gordon

WAB MEMBERS ABSENT:

Commissioner Andrea McGee
Commissioner Ben Sorensen
Commissioner Rhonda Eaton
Commissioner Mary Molina-Macfie
Commissioner Tim Ryan
Commissioner Tom Good
Governing Board Member Ron Bergeron

III. Roll Call Technical Advisory Committee

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kevin Hart, Chair
Albert Carbon

Susan Bodmann for Alan Garcia
Isabel Cosio-Carballo
Dr. Jennifer Jurado
Jose Lopez
Leny Huaman
Giovanni Batista
Patrick Davis
Mark Elsner for Pete Kwiatkowski
Heather Cunniff
Suzanne Mechler
Tim Welch

TAC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Randolph Brown, Vice Chair
Brett Butler
David Walker
Lisa Milenkovic
Mike Crowley
Mike Bailey
Rafael Frias
Renuka Mohammed
Stephanie Pearson
Steve Homes
Steve Urich
Talal Abi-Karam

ALSO PRESENT:

Michael Owens, County Attorney's Office
Gregory J. Mount, Ph.D., RPA, Water Resources Manager
Lenny Vialpando, Director, Broward County Resilient Environment Department
Anmarie Campbell, The Laws Group

IV. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. WAB Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 25TH, 2022

The Minutes of March 25th, 2022 could not be approved as a quorum was not met.

VI. Updates and Announcements

Dr. Jurado shared that County staff was coordinating with the South Florida Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers on authorization language to insert into WRDA pertaining to the comprehensive study of the C and SF resilience evaluation. Dr. Jurado announced that Broward County will be hosting the 14th annual compact summit this December, and that sponsorship opportunities would be distributed. Dr. Jurado then acknowledged the passing of Barry Faske, and turned to Commissioner Biederman to lead the acknowledgment

of passing. The contribution of Barry Faske's work in the field was recognized and recounted.

VII. Presentations

A. Septic and Sewers- Where do we go from here?

Dr. Jennifer Jurado, CRO and Deputy Director of the Resilient Environment Department, and Lenny Vialpando Director of the Resilient Environment Department.

Lenny Vialpando recapped highlights from a presentation previously delivered to the Board by Dr. Jurado on septic and sewers in Broward County. Mr. Vialpando presented two options for combating the use of septic tanks, the first involves installing sewer lines in unsewered areas and requiring connections, and the second examines sewer areas for non-connections while exploring the reluctance of residents to connect. Mr. Vialpando started outlining a pilot project of the second option in Broadview Park and shared that pulling municipal permits was necessary to identify connected and unconnected properties through examining the septic connection permits. Chair Geller interjected stating that the Board had already agreed to tackle the second option.

Mr. Vialpando recommended that municipalities pull permits to verify connections and reiterated this need as he described the complexity of the service areas that do not neatly align with jurisdictional boundaries. Mr. Vialpando explained that the authority over septic tanks does not lie with the County, but belonged to the Health Department, and as of June 2021 belongs to the Department of Environmental Protection in collaboration with the Health Department. Mr. Vialpando shared why the Health Department's maps of parcels with septic (or on-site treatment display systems) may be misleading. He then followed up on questions from the previous presentation on the accuracy of the delineation of sewer and unsewered areas in the County. He explained the limitations of the wastewater collection transmission system licensing process, and other permitting processes in accurately identifying these delineations.

Mr. Vialpando recalled the code changes in 2019 that gave utilities the duty of notifying residents of the timeframe to connect to sewer before being charged for sewer. He also suggested that while it is meant to incentivize residents to connect, the small increase in a monthly utility bill may be overlooked and is negligible when compared to the high cost of connecting to sewer. Mr. Vialpando continued to describe how the inconsistent service area and municipal jurisdictions could cause challenges for effective regulation and code enforcement of septic to sewer connections under Chapter 34.

Mr. Vialpando presented the results from the pilot project in Broadview Park reporting that in sewer areas not many connections have been made since 2018, and that within the BMSD neighborhood 39% of the area is still unsewered. He advised against aggressive enforcement on communities that may lack the means to connect and suggested looking into funding opportunities. Mr. Vialpando shared that it costs less than \$10,000 to connect to sewer and stated that while municipal utilities charge a capital recovery cost fee, Broward County does not. He also shared that the County's utility, WWS, has an interest free loan that

residents can repay on their monthly water bill. It was reported that many of the septic parcels overlap low to moderate income areas. Mr. Vialpando revisited the regulations outlined in Chapter 34 while reporting that septic tank repair permits are predominantly occurring in unsewered areas. The limitations of solely relying on permits were reiterated. It was also reported that whether a property was on septic or sewer did not impact the property value.

Dr. Jurado followed up on the request to confirm with the municipalities the sewerred and unsewerred areas, and reported that United Ranches was acknowledged as unsewerred, an additional sewerred area in the City of Pompano Beach was identified, and besides WWS, and Oakland Park, there were no other responses to the request.

Dr. Jurado addressed the inquiry on steps taken by municipalities and other governing bodies to confirm connections and reported that only 5 responses were received out of the 12 entities while positing the ability to confirm connection. She shared that the only two methods for confirming a connection would be through building permits, or through camera inspection within the system. Dr. Jurado reported that Countywide 1,100 repairs or permits were issued in unsewerred areas and suggested that in sewerred areas unpermitted septic repairs may be occurring or the septic tanks may not be maintained and could result in system failures. Dr. Jurado highlighted the best practices and strategies used by communities within the region and nation to tackle the issue and reviewed possible solutions. Dr. Jurado noted that Miami-Dade County was awarded resilient grant funding to aid wastewater collections that was tied to environmental water quality benefits and suggested that within Broward County, areas could be established from a water quality perspective that may allow for stronger grant applications to attract more funding for septic to sewer conversions. Dr. Jurado concluded the presentation by sharing that the DEP has been moving forward with a broader access to include more areas. Following the presentation, Chair Geller acknowledged the members

VIII. Discussion

Chair Geller acknowledged how valuable the meeting had been and requested that at the next meeting a brief version of the discussion be presented as well as a robust breakdown of the alternatives for tackling the issue in areas that are already sewerred. Chair Geller reiterated the request for solution-based ideas.

Councilmember Starkey stressed the need for a largescale plan and emphasized the urgency for developing such projects while there are several environmental resiliency opportunities at the state and federal levels. Councilmember Starkey noted that utility partnerships are not a new concept, and shared that she would work with Sunrise, and Cooper City to develop a plan, but suggested that a Countywide project would be ideal.

She also shared that the Town of Davie was awarded 1.2 million dollars from the state to reimburse and finish a sewer conversion project, noting that other cities are doing the same and stressing that there are several programs and

opportunities to take advantage of. She requested that the bigger picture and the available options be presented at the next meeting.

Chair Geller agreed with Councilmember Starkey's comments and reminded members to focus on sewer areas.

Dr. Jurado described the dramatic needs for action on this issue Countywide, highlighting eastern areas where sea level is influencing groundwater, and describing the potential impacts as western areas become more difficult to drain as the sea level rises.

Mr. Vialpando revisited chapter 34 regulations. Chair Geller noted that the difficulty is not being able to easily identify where repairs to septic tanks in sewer areas are being conducted. Mr. Vialpando noted that other septic maintenance services that do not require a permit may still be illegal in a sewer area such as septic pump outs.

Mayor Gomez reminded members to take advantage of the resiliency funds for seawalls and canal wall and projects to fortify the County.

Chair Geller noted the need for pumps and commented that even if canal walls are built up, they can't be drained.

Dr. Jurado provided a brief update on the authorization request on the comprehensive study and requested that members look for language that comes out about the comprehensive assessment and be prepared to provide statements of endorsement when the time comes.

Chair Geller advised that none of the members excluding Dr. Jurado, Mr. Vialpando, and Dr. Mount would understand or be able to follow, however they would be all willing to write letters of support. Mayor Gomez agreed with the Chair.

Commissioner Bell discussed an issue with his attendance in the minutes, and the attendance keeping of alternates was discussed.

IX. LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATER LEVELS: (ft-NGVD)

This month 12.98; Last month 13.77; one year ago: 13.99 (ft-NGVD)

X. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:13 pm.