

JOINT WATER ADVISORY BOARD/ TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

November 18, 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 422, Fort Lauderdale, FL on November 18, 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 present, and the record of attendance follows:

Name	Present	Virtual	Absent	Alternate	M/A
Senator Steve Geller – Chair	X				M
Vice Mayor Sandra Welch - Vice Chair	X				M
Commissioner Andrea McGee	X				A
Commissioner Doug Bell	X			Jack McCluskey	M
Commissioner Denise Grant			X		M
Commissioner Kevin Biederman	X				M
Commissioner Mary Molina- Macfie			X		A
Commissioner Nancy Metayer			X		A
Commissioner Rhonda Eaton	X				M
Commissioner Tim Ryan			X	Eugen Bold	M
Commissioner Tom Good	X				M
Councilmember Jim Allbritton			X		A
Councilmember Susan Starkey	X				M
Gene Goldman			X		M
Governing Board Member Ron Bergeron		X ALT		Pete Kwiatkowski/Lorraine Mayers	M
Kevin Hart – TAC Chair	X				M
Mark Peterson	X				M
Mayor Greg Ross			X		M
Mayor Michelle Gomez			X		A
Mayor Anthony Caggiano	X				M
Mayor Aisha Gordon			X		A
Vice Mayor Ben Sorensen				Resigned	A

III. Roll Call Technical Advisory Committee

Name	In Person	Virtual	Absent	Alternate Name
Kevin Hart (Chair)	X			
Randolph Brown Vice- Chair			X	
Albert Carbon	X			Chris Cappiello
Alan Garcia	X ALT			Susan Bodmann
Brett Butler	X			
Commissioner Doug Bell	X			Jack McCluskey
David Walker			X	
Giovanni Batista			X	
Heather Cunniff	X			
Isabel Cosio Carballo			X	
Jace Selby	X			
Dr. Jennifer Jurado	X			
Jose Lopez	X			
Dawn Teetsal	X			
Lisa Milenkovic			X	Cindy Griffen
Mike Bailey			X	Paul Thompson
Patrick Davis	X			
Pete Kwiatkowski		X ALT		Lorraine Mayers
Rafael Frias	X			Melissa Velez
Renuka Mohammed	X		X	Kiersy Pena Bratton
Heather Cunniff	X			
Stephanie Pearson	X			
Steve Holmes	X			
Jeff Jiang	X			
Suzanne Mechler	X ALT			Jon Goldman
Talal Abi-Karam			X	
Tim Welch		X ALT		Carrie Kashar

ALSO PRESENT:

Michael Owens, County Attorney's Office

Gregory J. Mount, Ph.D., RPA, Assistant Chief Resilience Officer

Donna Rhoden, Special Assistant to the Chief Assistant City Manager, City of Port St. Lucie

Carlos Adorisio, P.E., CFM, Engineering Unit Supervisor, Environmental Permitting Division,
Broward County Resilient Environment Department

Cynthia Dorobiala, The Laws Group

IV. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. WAB Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 9TH, 2022

A motion to approve the Minutes of September 9th, 2022, was made by Vice-Mayor Welch and seconded by Mayor Caggiano.

VI. Updates and Announcements (no announcements?)

A. Septic and Sewer Discussion Continued From 9/9/2022

i. Port St. Lucie – Case Study

Ms. Donna Rhoden, Special Assistant to the Chief Assistant City Manager, City of Port St. Lucie.

Chair Geller invited Ms. Donna Rhoden to present on the septic to sewer program in the City of Port St. Lucie. Ms. Rhoden reviewed the Port St. Lucie development and utility authority history, highlighting the failures that led to the transfer of utility management from General Development Utilities to St. Lucie County in 1990, and St. Lucie County to the City of Port St. Lucie in 1994. Ms. Rhoden noted that when the city inherited the utility, there were only 17,000 water connections and 10,000 sewer connections that have grown to 89,000 and over 71,000 respectively. These high numbers were attributed to the city's rapid growth and its early adoption of a water and sewer plan, and the several amendments and updates that drove improvements and expansion of the utility and water treatment system. Ms. Rhoden noted that the plan allowed for the expansion of over a thousand miles of water mains and low-pressure sewer mains funded through property owner assessments. Ms. Rhoden described the early subdivision of the city into special assessment districts (SAD) and the accompanying challenges faced including high level lawsuits that led to a change in nomenclature from SAD to utility service areas (USA). Some of the city's utility and sewer policies adopted post USA designation were highlighted including the prohibition of new septic tank installation in sewer areas, the gravity sewer requirement, the variance from the statute that requires connections, and the provision of a no interest connection fee payment plan. The payment plan option for sewer connection was outlined for both residential and commercial customers. It was reported that between 1999 when the first connections were done and September 2022, 9,835 conversions had been completed. Ms. Rhoden detailed how storms and the real estate market greatly influence the annual number of conversions completed (which is on average 447 since the 90s) and shared that at the real estate transaction point most mortgage companies will require connections in sewer areas.

Some of the environmental benefits of the Connect to Protect program were reviewed including the avoided 440,000 pounds of nitrogen loading into the Indian River Lagoon annually resulting from the total number of sewer connections city-wide, and the 60,485 pounds of nitrogen avoided due to the 9,835 septic to sewer conversions completed. It was noted that despite the program's success, 14,000 residential septic tanks are still

active. Ms. Rhoden provided an overview of the main findings from a two-year study conducted by Florida Atlantic University which mapped bacterial pollution hotspots within the city's water systems highlighting the Sagamore, the Elkcan, the Hog Pen, Monterey, and the Veterans as properties/ areas with high bacterial pollution.

It was pointed out that the largest hindrance to driving connections was the high cost (over \$6000 for residential). Following the study, the City Council allocated \$100,000 from the general fund for septic to sewer conversions, and after much consideration the utility decided to offer 50% grant to hotspot properties that were within 50 feet of a waterway connected to a river. This grant coupled with the payment plan on the remaining balance reduced the connection cost to roughly \$25 for the fiscal year. Ms. Rhoden described how the utility shared the grant opportunity with the eligible property owners and outlined the progress made in the pollution hotspots. In addition, the utility received another \$100,000 in legislative appropriations through the DEP in FY21 and received \$100,000 through the Indian River Lagoon's Estuary Grant program, increasing funding available for conversions. Ms. Rhoden emphasized that the ten-year financing program generates an outstanding balance of \$11,000,000 annually and could cause problems for operating revenues and debt coverage and could lead to large rate increases if the balance exceeded \$14,000,000. Ms. Rhoden was described how the annual number of conversions could be increased while not exceeding the balance and reviewed the structure of the ten-year financing program. Other conversion funding opportunities were highlighted.

Ms. Rhoden mentioned that the City's communications department developed a septic-to-sewer conversions website that had relevant information, videos, and scenes of the St. Lucie River meandering through Port St. Lucie and invited WAB/TAC members to explore the site. Ms. Rhoden welcomed questions from the members and following the presentation a lengthy question and answer segment transpired.

ii. **Notes from the County Attorney's Office**

Michael C. Owens, Esquire, Senior Assistant. (pg. 49, skipped)

iii. **Discussion**

Dr. Gregory Mount, Assistant Chief Resilience Officer, Resilient Environment Department.

Chair Geller recognized Dr. Mount inviting him to provide follow up to the September septic tank presentation. Dr Mount thanked the several parties that joined in and contributed to the thorough exploration of the possible actions that could be taken in Broward County to address the septic issue in sewerred areas. Dr. Mount recounted the solutions raised throughout the many WAB/TAC meeting discussions as well as through separate research and conversation and outlined the limitations of each proposed solution. Dr. Mount shared the findings from the investigation into the most efficient and cost effect method to identify whether a home was

connected to septic or sewer ranking smoke tests first and camera inspections second. Other strategies were presented including, a system that allowed neighbors to inform on illegal connections, developing a program through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) and/or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), municipal directed record search coupled with onsite verification, and lastly the development of a compliance program with incentives. During the overview, the process and associated costs, were outlined for the top two methods. Broadview Park was used as a case study to estimate the inspection costs per area. It was noted that the smoke tests would cost roughly \$42,500 per 500 acres, and if that cost was multiplied by the total sewer area presumed to have septic, the cost skyrockets to around 4.2 million dollars. Dr. Mount outlined how validating the initial smoke tests with secondary smoke tests or camera inspections could increase the costs to 33.2 million dollars. Following Dr. Mount's presentation Chair Geller invited members to join in on the conversation.

From the discussion the Chair made the following requests:

- the development of master plan identifying, and prioritizing hotspots connected to waterways for septic tank conversion with six or seven action items to be reviewed by the municipalities,
- and as advised by realtors the concrete determination of the extent to which local governments can mandate that properties must be connected when they are sold.

Chair Geller also committed to consulting the Health Department prior to the next meeting.

B. FEMA Flood Map Updates

Carlos Adorisio, P.E., CFM, Engineering Unit Supervisor, Environmental Permitting Division, Resilient Environment Department

Mr. Adorisio provided an update on the coastal flood risk study and the preliminary FEMA maps, shared background on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), outlined the history of updates to the map, and described how the 100-year flood elevation was modeled. Mr. Adorisio described FEMA's community engagement efforts surrounding the release of the preliminary map which allowed for comments on the changes. It was reported that roughly 89,000 parcels that were previously not in the flood plain in the 2014 map are now in the flood plain, with Miramar and Pembroke Pines most impacted. Conversely, 2400 parcels were removed from the flood plain. Mr. Adorisio noted that the appeal period had ended and a letter of final determination was likely to be issued by FEMA in early 2023, six months after which the maps become effective. Following the presentation Chair Geller invited members to ask questions.

C. Resilience Update

Dr. Jennifer Jurado, Chief Resilience Officer, and Deputy Director of the Resilient Environment Department.

Dr. Jurado reminded members of the dates for the Climate Summit and encouraged registration and thanked the sponsors. Chair Geller requested a summary of the summit at the next meeting.

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

This month 15.83; Last month 13.76; one year ago: 15.55 (ft-NGVD)

VIII. ADJOURN

With there being no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.