

Clearwater, Florida, February 9, 2004

A meeting of the Pinellas County Charter Review Commission (as created by Chapter 80-590, Laws of Florida) was held in Conference Room 211, Swisher Building, 509 East Avenue South, Clearwater at 8:35 A.M. on this date with the following members in attendance:

Robert C. Decker, Chairman
Susan Latvala, County Commissioner
John Bryan, City of St. Petersburg Councilmember
E. D. Armstrong, III
George Jirotko
Mayme Hodges
Elizabeth Mannion
Roger Wilson

Late Arrival:

Roy Harrell

Absent:

Louis Kwall, Vice-Chairman
Jim Sebesta, State Senator
Everett S. Rice, Sheriff
Ricardo Davis

Also Present:

Susan H. Churuti, County Attorney
Stephen M. Spratt, County Administrator
D. Gay Lancaster, Chief Assistant County Administrator
Elithia V. Stanfield, Assistant County Administrator
David P. Healey, Executive Director, Pinellas Planning Council (PPC)
Brian K. Smith, Planning Director
Kurt Spitzer, KS&A
James L. Bennett, Chief Assistant County Attorney
Dennis Long, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Jewel White Cole, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Robert Jackson, Mayor, City of Largo
Bill Foster, Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
Pete Bengston, Councilmember, City of Seminole
Frank DiDonato, Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs

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Nadine S. Nickeson, Commissioner, City of Safety Harbor
David Goodwin, Assistant Director of Development Services, City of
St. Petersburg
Herb Polson, City of St. Petersburg
Chris Staubus, Assistant Director, Utilities
Other interested individuals
Dawn Rubio, Board Reporter

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Public Comment
4. Discussion of Issues for Consideration by CRC
5. Discussion of the Pinellas Planning Council
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Decker called the meeting to order at 8:35 A.M.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF JANUARY 26, 2004 - APPROVED

Commissioner Latvala moved, seconded by Mr. Armstrong and carried, that the minutes of the regular meeting of January 26, 2004 be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT - CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM NO. 5

Chairman Decker requested that public comment be deferred until consideration of Item No. 5, Discussion of the Pinellas Planning Council; and no objections were noted.

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DISCUSSION OF ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY CRC - APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

Mr. Spitzer called attention to a document titled *Charter Discussion Issues*, a copy of which has been filed and made a part of the record; and related that the document is in draft form and is intended to assist in the identification and scheduling of specific issues for discussion; and that additional items may be added later.

He indicated further that the issues fall into groupings such as powers of the County Administrator; relationship between the County and municipal governments, including annexation; and housekeeping or technical changes; and that a suggestion had been made to form a subcommittee to discuss the issues; whereupon, Mr. Armstrong related that he prefers to meet more often as a group in order to hear all the discussion; and Commissioner Latvala agreed.

In response to query by Mr. Armstrong, Attorney Churuti indicated that Section 2.02(e), as it relates to protection of human rights, may not need to be included in the Charter as federal law offers protection; and that she will provide more detail at a later date.

Thereupon, Commissioner Latvala moved, seconded by Councilmember Bryan and carried, that the discussion issues as presented be approved for further consideration.

DISCUSSION OF THE PINELLAS PLANNING COUNCIL (PPC)

Chairman Decker indicated that the meeting will continue with presentations regarding the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC); and requested that detailed dialogue regarding the PPC be considered at a later date in order to allow Mr. Spitzer more time to prepare for the discussion.

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At this time, 9:05 A.M., Mr. Harrell entered the meeting.

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Mr. Spitzer reported that several Florida counties also operate with separate planning councils; and indicated that the need for the Pinellas Planning Council has become a matter of debate and opinion.

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Mr. Healey gave a brief history of the PPC; outlined the functions of the Council; and indicated that the PPC provides a system of checks and balances by having representation from the cities; that the Council process is an efficient system; that the PPC serves as a model to other built-out counties; and that the PPC should be preserved and enhanced.

Mr. Smith provided a history of the Planning Department; elaborated on the changing roles of the PPC since its inception; related that the planning process has become very complex in recent years; and emphasized the need for local input in the planning process.

Following discussion and in response to Councilmember Bryan, the following individuals expressed their concerns:

- Mayor Jackson indicated that the PPC operates as a system of checks and balances; that the planning services provided to smaller cities are billed to those cities; and that the Planning Council offers a forum for elected city officials with regard to countywide issues.
- Mayor DiDonato stated that he is President of the Council of Mayors; that the mayors' council passed a resolution requesting that the PPC be enhanced rather than eliminated; and suggested that duplication of planning efforts could be reduced by the PPC's acting as a countywide planning authority with an appeal process provided by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).
- Councilmember Foster related that the PPC provides an independent process and offers a forum for the 24 municipalities; and suggested that the issue has become a contest between the cities and the County.
- Mr. Goodwin contended that the smaller cities would not be able to provide similar services in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Councilmember Bengston indicated that he believes a lack of communication exists between the BCC and the cities.
- Ms. Lancaster related that the issue involves community resources and efficiency in the decision-making process; and in response to Councilmember Bryan, indicated that she will provide an analysis of the County's planning budget figures compared to the cities' costs for planning functions.

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Mr. Wilson expressed a desire that the public be represented in the planning process; and that the entities work together on the issue.

Commissioner Latvala referred to a flow chart titled *State Local Plan Amendment Process*, a copy of which has been filed and made a part of the record; and indicated that the cities are included in the amendment plan process.

In response to query by Mr. Harrell, Ms. Mannion and Attorney Churuti indicated that the zoning process will be covered during discussions relating to annexation and city/county relations.

Mr. Jirotko expressed his support of the PPC; and indicated that the Planning Council acts as a mediator in disputes between the cities.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Wilson stated that the next meeting will be held February 23 at 5:00 P.M.; and Mr. Spitzer announced that the agenda will include the role of the County Administrator and the audit and finance functions of the County.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 A.M.