

FEBRUARY 14, 2017 – WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Special Meeting on February 14, 2017 at 3:30 p.m. at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Cecilia Jones, Chairwoman; Commissioner W. N. (Bill) Chapman, Vice-Chairman; Commissioner Tony Anderson; Commissioner Sara Comander; and Commissioner Melanie Nipper. Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator; and Attorney Mark Davis, County Attorney; were also present.

Chairwoman Jones called the Workshop to order to discuss the county's strategic goals and objectives.

Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator, said the aim of the workshop was to compile a list of goals and objectives for the county. He announced there is an agenda item scheduled during the Regular Meeting should the board wish to vote on the list at that time.

Chairwoman Jones briefly discussed the Strategic Plan developed by Mr. Bill Imfeld, Economic Development Alliance (EDA) Interim Executive Director, and the growth of the Economic Development Alliance Board. She spoke on the importance of developing the master plan for the U.S. 331 Corridor and recommended public meetings be held to obtain input in the planning process.

Mr. Imfeld said a discussion regarding Waffle House locating to the Mossy Head Industrial Park will be held during the Regular Meeting. He reported efforts are being made locally and in Tallahassee to expedite the process to bring in an Illinois food distribution company to Mossy Head. Mr. Imfeld said there are some parcels still available. He also announced a company is considering the Wayne Farm property on U.S. Highway 90 E. A parcel

in the Freeport Industrial Park has been purchased and other parcels are being considered for purchase as well. He discussed a potential project on Highway 0605 and stated the issue is the lack of water and sewer. Mr. Imfeld said that efforts are being made to bring industry in to all of Walton County.

Chairwoman Jones asked Mr. Imfeld to briefly discuss the Strategic Plan for the EDA. Mr. Imfeld stated a significant effort is being placed on securing the funding for the development of the U.S. 331 Corridor. He discussed the need to develop a strategic economic development plan along that corridor and making the area more viable for future businesses.

Commissioner Nipper asked if any of the companies in the Mossy Head Industrial Park were paying more than minimum wage. Mr. Imfeld discussed the different opportunities from entry level to top management. He said there is a need for affordable housing in that area.

Chairwoman Jones reported the policies are being reviewed for recommendations and improvements.

Commissioner Comander discussed the visioning process she had started and is currently holding an online survey for comments from citizens to hear what is important.

Commissioner Chapman discussed the need for better health care in the rural areas north of the bay.

Ms. Holly Holt, Health Department, discussed the different ways the health department and the areas it facilitates are funded.

Commissioner Anderson briefly addressed the safety issues at the intersection of U.S. 98 and C.R. 30A. He announced that an underpass is being considered to allow people to safely pass from the south side of U.S. 98 to the north side. Rep. Brad Drake is supportive of the project and is helping to secure funding.

Chairwoman Jones asked for an update on the landscaping along the U.S. 331 Corridor. Mr. Stan Sunday, Deputy County Administrator, discussed the different FDOT approved phases of landscaping which cover from U.S. 98 to just north of the Choctawhatchee Bay Bridge. He said the landscaping south of the bridge will be irrigated and maintained by the TDC. The landscaping north of the bridge will be xeriscape.

Commissioner Nipper noted the potential of development by larger companies with the installation of high speed internet and stated it should be a priority. Chairwoman Jones applauded Commissioner Comander's work in getting broadband to the county. Commissioner Comander credited staff with all the hard work that went into the project. She said private industry companies, such as Centurylink, should be encouraged to help provide the lines.

Chairwoman Jones encouraged the citizens to email the board members with ideas and comments.

There being no further items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved: Cecilia Jones
Cecilia Jones, Chairwoman

Attest: Dori Cordle, Deputy Clerk
for Alex Alford, Clerk of Courts and County Comptroller