

AUGUST 11, 2015-WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop on August 11, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.

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

Chairman Comander called to order the workshop to discuss Stormwater Management Policies. An ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the Walton County Land Development Code (LDC), adding a minimum finish floor elevation requirement; adding a requirement for stormwater management on lots of record with no storm water management system in place; revising stormwater performance and design standards in the LDC for consistency with the Walton County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Greg Graham, Engineering Services Manager, briefly discussed the revisions to the Stormwater Management Policies. He said the revisions were based on the following observations which were made during the July, 2013 and April, 2014 weather events: a number of homes which were flooded had finished floor elevations below the crown of the road; and some old platted subdivisions did not have a stormwater management plan. He said a provision is being recommended to require stormwater management for single family homes built on lots of record. Mr. Graham said that one revision is to bring the stormwater performance and design standards which are currently in the Land Development Code into the Comprehensive Plan for consistency.

Commissioner Meadows asked if these policy revisions would alleviate future problems. Mr. Graham stated yes. He said the revisions would prevent people from building the homes too low. He briefly discussed conditions for which exemptions would be allowed. He also said the only way to manage uncontrolled run-off in areas already developed, is to address it on the individual lot. Commissioner Meadows asked who would authorize the exemptions. Mr. Graham stated the county engineer or its designee.

Commissioner Jones questioned how stormwater issues north of the Choctawhatchee Bay were being addressed. Mr. Graham said the northern area was exempted from the revisions because most of the problems were in the southern area. He said two northern areas were being studied by consultants. Public Works does not feel that the areas north of the bay should be addressed at this time. He gave reasons why Public Works supports an exemption of the northern area: affordable housing; limited number of platted subdivision; not as many problem areas; land elevations; constraints on smaller lots south of the bay; and no sewer availability south of the bay. Commissioner Jones asked if areas north of the bay could be addressed at a later time. Chairman Comander voiced concern with not addressing the issues in a timely manner. Commissioner Jones expressed concern with the costs. Commissioner Meadows said that most of the growth in the northern area would be in subdivisions with stormwater systems.

Mr. Graham said he had received a lot of public input on various aspects and announced that there were people present who wished to speak regarding the revisions. Chairman Comander asked when the next draft would be available. Mr. Graham said he would present it as soon as possible.

Mr. Lloyd Blue spoke regarding the policy revisions. He discussed recent weather events and felt it would be impossible to design a stormwater management to meet the highest

conditions. He agreed with Public Works' observations and revision recommendations. He discussed how road construction affects the height of the roads and recommended that this be considered in the policies. He also recommended addressing the recertification of stormwater plans. Mr. Blue suggested that conforming and non-conforming structures also be addressed in the policies. He discussed the provisions in 5.06.03 and recommended the county consider addressing stormwater on an individual basis. He recommended the county follow FDEP mandates and allow stormwater management systems to be constructed under residential and/or commercial structures. Mr. Blue discussed the need for more requirements on professional services. He voiced concern on how stormwater would be handled in the older subdivisions, the potential problems with new construction in these subdivisions, and suggested new construction be placed on pilings rather than fill to raise the construction height. He recommended clearer and more concise codes.

Commissioner Chapman said Mr. Blue brought up several good points and felt potential adverse effects should be considered when creating the policies. He directed Mr. Graham to incorporate Mr. Blue's recommendations.

Commissioner Meadows discussed the increase in fill being used at construction sites and the flooding issues which occur. She asked whether it was infiltration systems or standing pond water which was disallowed underneath structures. Mr. Graham said the provision (5.06.03(15)) was based on a number of problems that had arisen in the past which were directly affected by water stored underneath structures. He briefly discussed solutions that are being used to address the problems and felt the provision was a good standard. Commissioner Meadows asked if an infiltration system could be buried underneath the structure. Mr. Graham responded that it would be feasible, but would be difficult to maintain and inspect. He said that there is not enough staff

to perform stormwater recertification. Commissioner Meadows asked to add a requirement to 5.06.03(17) for an initial stormwater inspection to be performed upon construction and to make the property owner responsible for reporting yearly inspections to the county.

Chairman Comander voiced concern with the issues of mold, mosquitoes, snakes, and rot derived from having stormwater retention under a building. Mr. Blue clarified that the circumstances he addressed applied to structures on pilings. He did not recommend stormwater storage under an enclosed structure.

Commissioner Meadows questioned if there was any way for staff to give stormwater options to property owners/contractors. Mr. Graham stated that was the intent of the review by a professional engineer requirement. Commissioner Meadows asked if there was policy stating to use the strictest standards. Mr. Graham said it is found in 5.06.01 and would consider Mr. Blue's suggestion for clearer and more concise codes. Commissioner Meadows asked how this would affect existing homes. Mr. Graham said that more research would have to be done.

Mr. Neill O'Connell, O'Connell and Associates, discussed stormwater engineering aspects, lots of records, and spoke in support of regional stormwater management plans. He voiced opposition to holding the individual owner responsible for a stormwater management plan, but felt it was a good short term solution for existing developments. He also addressed stormwater storage underneath structures and said it will not work in all areas.

Commissioner Meadows presented a hypothetical construction dilemma and asked Mr. O'Connell how the stormwater should be addressed. Mr. O'Connell discussed similar issues on Montgomery Street and the solutions which could be used to address the dilemma. Discussion continued on possible solutions and the costs to the taxpayers.

Mr. Jones clarified that staff would consider what has been presented and will bring back a revised draft. Mr. Graham addressed Commissioner Meadows' hypothetical construction dilemma and said that a professional engineer would have had to review the lot for stormwater management. He also addressed individual stormwater management. He said that he would work with staff to present a revised draft.

There being no other items to present, the workshop was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Approved: Bill Imfeld
Bill Imfeld, Chairman

Attest: Alex Alford
Alex Alford, Clerk of Court and County Comptroller