

**Minutes**  
**Sarasota Agriculture Policy Council**  
**August 23, 2005**  
**Twin Lakes Park**

A meeting of the Sarasota Agriculture Policy Council (SAPC) was held on August 23, 2005 at Sarasota County Extension Office, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota. The meeting was called to order at 9:21 am.

**In attendance**

Mike Barker (Natural Resources), Peter Burkam (Grower), Carolyn Gregov (Extension), Jodi John (Sustainable Sarasota), Robert Kluson (Extension), John Matthews (Sarasota Farmers Market), Laura Morton (FL West Coast RC & D), Nina Powers (Sustainable Sarasota), Betsy Roberts (Sierra Club), Fred Santana (Extension) and Paul Taylor (Sarasota County Cattlemen Association).

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes were amended by Laura Morton to add her name to the list of attendees. Mike Barker moved to accept the minutes from the July 27, 2005 meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Jodi John and passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

*Part Three (3) Submittal to Planning Department for EAR Comp Plan Update*  
The Council discussed Part 3 Addendum of policy recommendations and agreed on modifications. See attachment for the modifications to Part 3 Addendum of the policy recommendations.

There was additional discussion on the following topics:

- 1) **Robert Kluson reported that there have been a couple of requests from recent meetings with the Planning Department for the planned BCC presentation.**
  - a) **The first request is that the text “incentives” be substituted with the text “support” in the policy recommendations. In response to these changes, the future role of the SAPC was discussed. For example, if the use of “incentives” represents a support mechanism that would be specified at the ordinance and not the policy level, then the SAPC must continue to provide the necessary counsel for the ordinance phase of these policy recommendations. To this end, the SAPC should consider being appointed an official advisory board to the BCC.**
  - b) **The second request is that in Chapter 9 only the policy recommendations that are approved at today’s meeting will be used, i.e., not the ones developed for the 2050 Plan Supplement to Chapter 9.**
  
- 2) **In response to a question about which standards are to be used to approve the sustainable agriculture practices cited in the policy recommendations, it was pointed out that there are programs at both the federal and state levels that are providing such standards. For example, at the USDA there are the programs of Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) and the National Sustainable Agriculture**

**Information Service (ATTRA).** At the state level, there are number of programs in sustainable agriculture, e.g., the Agroecology Program at the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the Departments of Agronomy and Horticultural Sciences of the University of Florida; the College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture of Florida A&M University; and the Agroecology Program at Florida Atlantic University. In addition, the UF/IFAS Extension provides information and education on sustainable agriculture.

**3) There was discussion about the possible fall referendum for the county's Environmentally Sensitive Protection Program (ESLPP) that would provide up to \$100 million for the acquisition of additional green space parklands. These lands then provide opportunities for the policy recommendations for sustainable agriculture in the Parks & Recreation chapter. Robert Kluson reported that he will make a presentation to the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Oversight Council (ESLOC) on September 1<sup>st</sup> during their deliberations about the land use criteria for these green space parklands.**

4) There was discussion on the validity for establishing a parcel lower size limit of 5 acres for a small farm. Robert Kluson stated that such parcel statistics are being collected not to disallow the use of smaller parcels but to present some preliminary data to the BCC as to the current status of available parcels for small scale agriculture.

#### *BCC Resolution for Sustainable Agriculture*

The Council discussed the latest version of the proposed Resolution for Sustainable Agriculture and agreed on modifications. See attachment for the final version including the modifications. The Resolution now will be sent to the County's Attorney Office for review.

### **New Business**

#### *Draft of BCC Presentation on Sept. 6, 2005*

The comments by Robert Kluson were included in the discussions on modifications to the policy recommendations that were summarized above.

#### *Farm to Cafeteria Conference Summary*

Robert Kluson reported on this conference that attracted approx. 400 people from across the country. The attendance was a testimonial to the widespread growth of this movement because 3 years ago a similar conference only attracted 50 people. The scope of the presentations on local agriculture market development included schools, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, small grocery stores, and restaurants. The sessions that he attended focused on economic impacts, school policies, and program evaluations. In addition, he purchased CDs of many other sessions, including a special training for food service managers that are now available as a lending library from Sarasota County Extension. At this conference it was announced that the first USDA approved mobile slaughter facility was completed in Washington State. This equipment represents a significant new resource to small farmers to provide meat products to Farm to School programs. To this end, information will be forwarded to the Sarasota County Cattlemen Association and 4H Foundation, and local counties to solicit consideration and support for acquiring such a unit in our region.

## **Reports**

### *Members*

1) John Matthews reported the initiation of a Wednesday Farmers Market in November, 2005. The location will be near Burns Court in Sarasota. There is also a 3rd location being developed for the future.

## **Next Meeting and Agenda**

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2005 at 9.00 am at the Sarasota County Extension Office.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 am.