

Minutes
Sarasota Agriculture Policy Council
July 27, 2005
Twin Lakes Park

A meeting of the Sarasota Agriculture Policy Council (SAPC) was held on July 27, 2005 at Sarasota County Extension Office, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota. The meeting was called to order at 9:17 am.

In attendance

Becky Ayech (Small Farmer), Mike Barker (Natural Resources), Elizabeth Bharucha (Sierra Club), Lamont Couch (Ofc of Rep. K. Harris), Lisa Eisen (NRCS), Carolyn Gregov (Extension), Jodi John (Sustainable Sarasota), Robert Kluson (Extension), Michael McGuire (Heifer International), Rory Martin (Farm Bureau), John Matthews (Sarasota Farmers Market), Laura Morton (FL West Coast RC&D), Andy Neuhofer (Farm Bureau), Nina Powers (Sustainable Sarasota), Ellen Richardson (Small Farmer), and Betsy Roberts (Sierra Club).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were amended by Becky Ayech to remove the name of Ross Martin (SWFWMD) from the list of attendees. Becky Ayech moved to accept the minutes from the July 6, 2005 meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Mike Barker and passed unanimously.

Old Business

Part Three (3) Submittal to Planning Department for EAR Comp Plan Update
The Council discussed Part 3 of policy recommendations and agreed on modifications [i.e., starting with Policy 2.1.2 (Chapter 5) to as far as Policy 2.1.4 (Chapter 11)]. See attachment for the modifications to Part 3 of the policy recommendations, as well as the Part 3 Addendum that was deferred to the next meeting.

There was additional discussion on the following topics:

- 1) **A comment was directed to the July 6th meeting minutes and the topic of possible mosquito control spraying impacts on organic farms/gardens. It was discussed that cooperation and communication with Mosquito Control, as well as among other county agencies, is very important and achievable.**
- 2) **In response to a question about how common are community efforts such as the Sarasota Ag Policy Council, it was pointed out that national conferences and many communities are promoting local agricultural economy and sustainability. One example was the recent 2005 Farm to Cafeteria Conference that had approx. 400 attendees and presented successful programs, including Florida A& M University Extension's Farm to School program in the Florida panhandle and surrounding states. Each member of the Council was also given a copy of Sarasota Herald Tribune's May 22, 2005 article "The time is ripe for a metro food policy based on**

- sustainability” by Neal Pierce. This article listed legislative and local initiatives across the country.
- 3) It was announced that a proposed ESLPP referendum this fall would broaden the criteria for environmental land acquisition and protection to include agricultural green space. Robert Kluson is on the agenda for the September meeting of ESLOC and will report back to the Council on this information.
 - 4) Several options were presented to support more teachers interested in having school gardens and garden-based curriculum. These teachers need help to maintain these gardens to be successful. For example, a possible future role for master gardeners would be as mentors and volunteers to these teachers. An organization called “Slow Food” offers fundraising and volunteer support for school gardens. There is now forming a Slow Food chapter in Sarasota. Also the Farm Bureau can offer additional support to the Ag in the Classroom program.
 - 5) In response to a question concerning the food security issue of school and community gardens, it was announced that Sarasota Extension will soon be hosting a visiting UF Faculty who is working on food security issues in the Caribbean. This person will be invited to make a presentation at a future Council meeting.
 - 6) There was a question on the relationship of this Council to the intergovernmental and citizen groups of the recommended policies 1.1.4 and 2.1.4 in Chapter 11. It was decided that the Council is not necessarily intended to continue as one of these groups. The mandate of the Council was reiterated to be the formation of policy recommendations to the Planning Department as input on sustaining agriculture to the current update process of the Comprehensive Plan of Sarasota County. The discussion of the future role of the Council was deferred to the end of the update process in October or November of 2005.
 - 7) The impacts of regulations on agricultural sustainability were considered and discussed. For example, farmers can view them as obstacles to production. They can also be explained as the results from uncontrolled development that creates incompatible mixed land uses.

BCC Resolution for Sustainable Agriculture

The final version was distributed to the Council but discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

New Business

Heifer International Partnership for Sarasota Community Food System Assessment

Mike McGuire made a Power Point presentation that focused on the following points:

- History of Heifer International and its “Passing on the Gift” programs
- Food security and community food system definitions and issues
- US agriculture trends in environmental, social and economic sustainability
- Community food system assessment definition and methodology
- Role of community food systems development in land planning (e.g., 2006 APA Conference)

Farm to Cafeteria Conference Summary

The report was deferred to the next meeting.

Reports

Members

N/A

Next Meeting and Agenda

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 17, 2005 at 9.00 am at Sarasota County Extension Office.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.