

**SOUTH MIAMI DADE WATERSHED STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Meeting I**

July 26, 2001

Miami-Dade Cooperative Extension Service Office  
Homestead, Florida  
8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

**Report of Proceedings**

**WELCOME**

The meeting was opened by Committee Chairperson Roger Carlton who thanked everyone for coming and introduced the Honorable Katy Sorenson, Miami-Dade County Commissioner. Commissioner Sorenson welcomed everyone and commended them for agreeing to serve on a committee whose work and ultimate recommendations will be of great importance to the area. The Commissioner gave the group its "charge" and reminded them of the need for the work they will be overseeing. She then turned the meeting over to Chairperson Carlton who introduced other dignitaries who were in attendance as well as thanking the Miami-Dade Cooperative Extension Service Office for the use of their facility and Lockheed Martin IMS for sponsoring the refreshments for the day.

A list of the current members of the Committee is attached as Exhibit A.

The Chairperson then turned the meeting over to the meeting Facilitator, Janice M. Fleischer, of the South Florida Regional Planning Council Institute for Community Collaboration.

**AGENDA REVIEW, DISCUSSION GUIDELINES**

Ms. Fleischer reviewed the meeting Objectives and Agenda for the day. The Objectives were:

- To review the Committee's history and charge;
- To provide Committee members the opportunity to begin learning about each other's interests and getting to know one another;
- To hear about The Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida;
- To begin to review and build a common information base regarding the South Miami-Dade Watershed system;
- To initially identify the range of critical issues that the Committee might address and the members' diverse and common perspectives on those issues;
- To learn about the Florida Government in the Sunshine Act requirements.

A copy of the Objectives and Agenda are attached as Exhibit B.

She then outlined the day's discussion guidelines (Exhibit C) and facilitator responsibilities (Exhibit D). She explained that public input would be solicited in a variety of ways. Comment cards which could be turned in at the end of each meeting were made available to everyone, her fax number and email address were displayed and an "Idea Parking Lot" (large flipchart sheets left blank for anyone to write on) was placed in a prominent place for anyone to write down any thoughts they had about the day or the process in general. All written comments received, whether on Comment Card, by email, fax or on the Idea Parking Lot would be incorporated into the Report of Proceedings which would be prepared after each meeting and distributed to all attendees as well as being posted on the Council's Website. At future meetings, when time allows, direct public comment will be included in the day's Agenda.

## **INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS**

Each committee member was asked to introduce him/herself and give a short statement of his/her expectations of the process. Chairperson Carlton encouraged the members of the committee to tell something personal about themselves as well their business affiliation.

The expectations that were expressed follow:

1. Ensure high quality water supply and flood protection.
2. Protect the national parks.
3. Want to explore how land use changes affect the environment and the parks.
4. Develop a workable plan; preserve the environment and the quality of life while allowing economic development.
5. Take a holistic approach to land development and water quality; review impacts of sprawl and power plants on parks.
6. Water when needed and no water when it is not needed; better flood control; help the nursery industry.
7. Clean and healthy environment; canal maintenance.
8. Balance different interests.
9. Environmental restoration (**CERP?**); make sure to include stakeholder plans into process.
10. Implementation, not just recommendations.
11. Bring resources to the process; a sense of ownership for the process from the Committee.
12. Sustainable hospitality and tourism industry.
13. Support policy making by engineers
14. Fulfill Comprehensive Plan requirements (Land Use Policy 3E).
15. Balance amounts of water to preserve agriculture.
16. Flood prevention; invasive pest management.
17. Convey the challenges of managing Biscayne National Park.
18. Protect and maintain the agricultural character of the area and the environment.
19. Balance water supply and flooding with the environment; ensure sound sewer and potable water.

Ms. Fleischer introduced the staff and observers were invited to introduce themselves as well.

A list of all attendees is attached as Exhibits E. (1) & (2)

The meeting was adjourned for a short break.

## **COMMITTEE HISTORY, GENESIS AND CHARGE, A PRESENTATION**

Upon returning from break, the Facilitator turned the meeting over to John Hulsey, *Senior Planner, South Florida Regional Planning Council*, and Cindy Dwyer, *Principal Planner, Miami-Dade County Planning and Zoning*, for presentations on the history, development and current charge of the Committee.

Ms. Dwyer's PowerPoint presentation is attached as Exhibit F.

Mr. Hulsey spoke about the project timeline and the roles of the varied participants in the process. In doing so, Mr. Hulsey emphasized that the Timeline was somewhat flexible and the roles of participants as he listed them were intended to give an overview and not to cover all interests or possibilities.

**SOUTH MIAMI-DADE WATERSHED STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Timeline**

Phase I July-December 2001	Advisory Committee meets to develop Scope of Work for planning consultant contract(s)
Phase II January-March 2002	Request for Letters of Interest, Consultant(s) chosen
Phase III April 2002-March 2003	Consultant(s) develop plan, Advisory Committee and Technical Committee meetings to review draft product and provide input
Phase IV April-June 2003	Final Plan approval by Advisory Committee, Presentation to local government(s) of findings and recommendations

**ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

**Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners:**

- Authorizes South Miami-Dade Watershed Plan process to take place;
- Establishes Advisory Committee;
- Authorizes expenditures through the Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Reviews and takes action on recommendations of the Plan.

**Miami-Dade County Department of Planning and Zoning:**

- Initiates and provides oversight to overall planning process;
- Authorizes expenditures related to the process;
- Provides financial, staff and information resources;
- Is represented on Advisory Committee.

**South Florida Regional Planning Council:**

- Manages planning process; including contracts of planning consultant(s);
- Provides in-kind, staff and information resources;
- Facilitates Advisory Committee through its Institute for Community Collaboration;
- Is represented on Advisory Committee.

**South Florida Water Management District:**

- Provides in-kind and information resources;
- Is represented on Advisory Committee.

**South Miami-Dade Watershed Plan Advisory Committee:**

- Represents the interests of government, business, and citizens' groups in the Watershed;
- Develops more detailed objectives of the planning process for the Watershed;
- Assists in the development of a Scope of Work for the planning consultant(s);
- Reviews and comments on products of planning consultant(s);
- Provides a forum for public comment before Plan finalization; and
- Makes Plan recommendations to County Commissioners.

**Planning Consultant(s):**

- Synthesizes data and recommendations from previous studies;
- Responds to Scope of Work and objectives developed by Advisory Committee;

- Develops future scenarios describing impacts of development in Watershed;
- Recommends to Advisory Committee policies necessary to meet objectives.

At the end of Ms. Dwyer and Mr. Hulsey's presentations, the Facilitator asked the members if they had any questions. One member asked how often the Committee is expected to meet. Mr. Hulsey indicated that the timeline would necessitate monthly meetings during Phase I, and possibly more infrequent meetings once Phase II is initiated.

**“WORKING TOGETHER COLLABORATIVELY, CONSENSUS WORKS!”**

Mr. Carlton then introduced Richard Pettigrew, Chair of the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida (GCSSF) from 1994 to 1999, when they completed the scope of the work they were tasked to do. That commission dealt on a larger scale with many of the same issues with which the South Miami Dade Watershed Study Advisory Committee will consider. The GCSSF was a much larger committee consisting of multiple stakeholders, most of whom had never worked in a consensus-based decision making environment in which collaboration was expected and nurtured. Mr. Pettigrew explained the initiation of his commission's process which resulted in hundreds of decisions being made by unanimous consent. He encouraged the Watershed Committee to work collaboratively and expressed his feeling that this results in recommendations that everyone is willing to support.

Additionally, Mr. Pettigrew spent some time giving an overview of the water issues and history of the Everglades that his former commission had explored. He particularly recommended two reports to the group: The “Everglades Water Budget Presentation” and “Seepage Management”, both by the Technical Advisory Committee to the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida. It was agreed that these two reports would be duplicated and made available on the SFRPC Website (and in hard copy for those with no internet access).

The Facilitator then adjourned the meeting for lunch.

**WATERSHED FACTOIDS/AREA BOUNDARIES**

Upon their return from lunch, the Facilitator introduced the next two speakers: Robert Usherson, *Chief, Metropolitan Planning Section, Miami-Dade Planning and Zoning* and Shawn Sculley, *Director, Coastal Ecosystems Watershed Management, South Florida Water Management District*. Mr. Usherson and Mr. Sculley gave presentations that included the following elements:

- ❖ Current land use regulations
- ❖ The Comprehensive Master Plan
- ❖ Transit and transportation
- ❖ Water resources and supply
- ❖ Population and its impact on water and land use
- ❖ Rainfall and topography
- ❖ Soil conditions

Mr. Scully explained that the Water Management District had a “balancing act” in fulfilling its primary responsibilities of: 1) flood protection; 2) water supply; 3) sustaining the natural system; and 4) sustaining water quality.

Member packets included a copy of Objective 3E of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, Land Use Element which is attached as Exhibit G along with a boundary map, Exhibit H.

The presentations were followed by Member questions to the presenters.

A copy of Mr. Usherson's presentation is attached as Exhibit I.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES AND THEIR CHALLENGES**

The next section of the meeting was designed to allow the members to begin identifying those issues of critical concern to them and the challenges that may be faced in resolving those issues. Prior to the meeting, members had been sent a Critical Issues Survey form to be completed and sent to the Facilitator for compilation. The results of the survey were contained in the members packets (Exhibit J). Using those responses as a stepping off point, the members were asked to brainstorm the issues and challenges they think they will face in this process. Their responses follow:

### **ISSUES:**

- Who is responsible for flooding and drainage?
- What is the current amount of water flowing to Biscayne Bay and how much is needed for a healthy ecosystem?
- Protection of property rights
- Difficulty of providing timely solutions to problems that only the government can solve.
  - citrus canker
  - flooding
  - economic study of agriculture
- Drought conditions and the water table; preserving agricultural industry beyond profitability.
- What water quality standards are we trying to achieve?
- Water management
  - Current conditions
  - Impact of planned projects
  - Balance flooding/quality/distribution/timing and supply of water
  - This applies to all land uses: agriculture, residential, parks
- The study boundary doesn't coincide with the issues.
- Who is responsible for maintaining the canals?
- Keeping agriculture sustained and profitable, not viewed as just a hobby.
- The timing and distribution of water supply for agriculture.
- Impacts of large land uses on water quality.
- Stormwater runoff impacts/tied to population increases and land use changes.
- Financing alternatives.
- Define the difference between a drainage ditch and a SFWMD canal.
- How will we meet future housing needed given NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) attitude/ County plan?
- Protecting existing wetlands
- Wastewater reuse technology in south Dade.
- Informing the Committee about all plans and projects in the study area.
- Impacts on schools
- The development industry is missing from the table.
- Farm workers are missing

## CHALLENGES:

- Balancing the issues.
- Meeting the objectives in Land Use Element 3E (Identifying and protecting lands for Biscayne Bay National Park)
- How will we balance competing equally compelling interests?
- The study boundary doesn't coincide with the issues.
- How to regulate water without destroying agriculture.
- Controlling urban sprawl and protecting agriculture as an industry.
- Maintaining ground water quality for residential.
- Articulate the elements of a 50-100 year vision.
- Developing a scientific basis to identify land to be conserved for Biscayne National Park protection and establishing a realistic funding mechanism.
- Establishing a healthy, diverse, and sustainable economy that does not rely on urban development boundary expansion.
- Getting technical information to the Committee in an understandable way.
- Preparing a strategy to address issues during the planning process (i.e. decisions being made while we are deliberating may affect what we can/can not do)
- Defining the big picture issues/ then focus on small ones.
- Getting people to listen to the "locals".
- Who is needed for implementation to take place?
- Prioritizing issues.

At this point in the day, the Agenda had called for a break to be followed by a presentation on the Sunshine Law. However, the County Attorney who was to deliver the Sunshine presentation was still involved in a Miami Dade County Commission meeting and was unable to attend. It was decided to skip the break, have the members give their thoughts on what future presentations they would like to see and adjourn for the day. The Sunshine Law presentation would be rescheduled for the next meeting. (Exhibit K)

The following items were listed as possible future presentations:

1. Dick Frost on boundaries to protect Biscayne National Park.
2. Overview of inventory of studies affecting Biscayne Bay.
3. Water in South Dade?
4. Have each different stakeholder at table give his/her perspective on water management.
5. Agricultural industry presentation to understand the industry/diversity/status/needs.
6. Agriculture study to present "deliverables" to the Committee.
7. United State Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
8. South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
9. Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM)
10. Everglades National Park
11. Biscayne National Park

## **CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Carlton ended the meeting with some closing thoughts and thanked all the members. Ms. Fleischer reminded the members to complete their evaluations and turn them in before they left.

The meeting was then adjourned.

## **IDEA PARKING LOT AND OTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Projects like this, interdisciplinary in nature, offer the opportunity to educate our next generation of planners, farmers, engineers, scientists, you name it. A link between this Committee's work and local universities (FIU, UF, UM) should be created, and education can be made an integral part of whatever tasks permeate out of this Committee. Action item: Contact interested parties at FIU/UF/UM and invite to next meeting.

Add Florida Atlantic University, Miami-Dade Community College, NOVA

Include all levels of education, including high school and elementary school.