

# Lee County Recovery Task Force

## Meeting Minutes

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | DECEMBER 15, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

### Call to Order

On December 15, 2023, Chair Ruane convened the meeting at 10:00 AM with the following members present:

- Commissioner Kevin Ruane, Chair
- Property Appraiser Matt Caldwell, Vice Chair
- Councilman Bill Veach
- Mayor Jon McLain
- Chief Ryan Lamb (On behalf of the City of Cape Coral)
- Chief Robert Dilallo
- Councilwoman Holly Smith
- Board Chair Armor Persons
- Rep. Jenna Persons-Mulicka
- Councilman Chris Corrie
- Board Member David Collins
- Chief Tracy McMillion (on behalf of the City of Fort Myers)

#### County Liaisons

- Dave Harner, County Manager
- Christine Brady, Assistant County Manager

#### Facilitators

- Harrison Newton, Hagerty Consulting
- Tessa LeSage, Collaboratory

## Welcome, Introductions, and Minutes Approval

Chair Ruane opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and Member introductions. Ms. Smith moved to approve the meeting minutes from the November 16 Recovery Task Force (RTF) meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Corrie. Chair Ruane thanked Branch Members for attending the meeting and for their participation throughout the recovery and resilience planning process. Branch Members were gifted a challenge coin from the County Administration for their dedication and support.

## Overview of Recent Efforts

Tessa LeSage, facilitator, summarized efforts and accomplishments to draft the ResilientLee Recovery and Resilience Plan (the Plan). Ms. LeSage thanked Branch Members for their service and expressed gratitude for their participation in the recovery and resilience planning process. Harrison Newton, facilitator, reviewed recent work toward development of the Plan and described the next steps toward its finalization. Mr. Newton stated that finalization could include a potential RTF meeting in January 2024, and reminded jurisdiction representatives to provide images to the Support Team to improve visual representation.

## Public Feedback Summary and Discussion

Mr. Newton reviewed the data collected during the ResilientLee Public Input Session hosted in late November and early December, including an analysis of the community's review of, and feedback on, the Initiatives for the Plan. Mr. Newton reflected that comments made by the public were often supportive of the strategic objectives of the Initiatives with added community-specific ideas.

Members discussed the data and general feedback gathered during the Public Input Session. Mr. Lamb stated that the goal was to create a common vision for recovery and resilience with a framework for municipalities and stakeholders to work in a unified direction. Mr. Lamb stated that the application of the Initiatives to aligned projects is the next step.

Ms. Smith stated that it is important for each municipality to have the opportunity to review and provide feedback to move forward with adoption of the Plan. Chair Ruane thanked Members for their comments and stated that there will be time for each municipality to provide feedback in the long-term recovery process.

Mr. Veach stated that presentations on the Plan by the County Administration to appropriate boards and municipalities support an inclusive way to bring key stakeholders together.

Ms. Smith stated that economic recovery is a priority and supported the Branch structure staying intact during finalization of the Plan.

Mr. McMillion asked what public feedback was internalized or resulted in changes to the direction of Plan development. Mr. Newton described the strategic feedback from the community, referenced the relevant Initiatives, and outlined the approach applied to address feedback in the Plan.

Mr. James Evans thanked the Support Team and RTF Members for their work during the Plan development process. He stated the return on investment is not as readily available in the analysis of the value of natural resources and suggested the members consider the economic value of natural resources when making decisions to invest in the recovery and resilience of the community.

Ms. Diana Giraldo asked how the Plan will be aligned across the jurisdictions and stakeholders. Mr. Newton stated that the determination for implementation is the next step in recovery and it requires collaboration across all sectors.

Ms. Smith requested that current materials be shared with all RTF and Branch Members, including an opportunity to advise and engage moving forward.

Mr. McLain stated the Village of Estero appreciates the input of the Branches and supports the Branch process continuing to inform the recovery and resilience planning process.

Ms. Marybeth Saunders supported the development of a method to keep the resilience of the Plan through the implementation process.

Mr. John Lai stated that Sanibel has engaged Florida Gulf Coast University to conduct economic studies to analyze the data to accomplish the goals of the Plan.

Mr. McMillion stated that the City of Fort Myers supports the Branch process continuing to inform the recovery and resilience planning process.

Ms. Stephanie Wardein supported the consideration of additional opportunities for community engagement and the development of a strategic public engagement plan.

Ms. Jennifer Hagen asked how community members might work together to align their work to the priorities outlined in the Plan. Members discussed implementation and facilitation of the Plan in the future.

Ms. Smith requested that any tracked changes be identified between the draft versions and the final product.

## Plan Development Next Steps

Mr. Newton described the next steps to discuss, collaborate, and provide feedback among RTF and Branch Members. Mr. Harner stated that jurisdictions may coordinate with the County Manager's office to request presentations on the Plan to municipal boards and other critical stakeholders.

## Public Comment

Kathy Morgan recommended that the final version of the Plan should reflect that most comments during the Public Input Session were made to natural resources Initiatives.

Marsha Ellis stated concerns with the timeline of the Public Input Session and the ability to submit substantive comments on Initiatives. She indicated that she submitted comments on December 8, and took time to write substantive and meaningful comments. Ms. Ellis stated she hoped to work with others to make meaningful comments. She asked who is responsible for further editing the Plan. Ms. Ellis commented that the public has a broad perspective on where funds could be abused and where policies that have not been successful in the past cannot be implemented. She asked for value to be placed on public input and community strategy.

Jessica McElwee thanked Branch Members and suggested providing the public with some sort of living dashboard of funding opportunities that can be amended as grant funding changes. She suggested that a dashboard should be considered in the second phase of implementation and supported having important conversations on implementation as the process moves forward.

## Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Ruane provided closing remarks and thanked Members for their work. The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 AM on December 15, 2023.