

Natural Resources Branch Meeting

Meeting Minutes

10:30 AM | MARCH 17, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | OPEN MEETING

Call to Order

On March 17, 2023, The Natural Resources Branch Meeting convened at 10:30 a.m. with the following members present:

- Dan DeLisi
- Mary Beth Saunders
- Ryan Berger
- Daniel Andrews
- Maya Robert
- Holly Milbrandt
- Matt Caldwell
- Joanne Ribble
- Jesse Sorrells
- Kate Gooderham

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Terry Mazany
- Tessa LeSage
- Shanna Snider
- Robbie Heere
- Ilani Fernandes

Introductions

Dan DeLisi, Branch Lead, welcomed the team and provided Branch Members with his background and experience in Lee County. Branch Members went around the room and introduced themselves.

Review of the Recovery and Resilience Planning Structure and Timeline

Mr. Mazany, presented on the work of the Recovery Task Force and Branches including the RTF looking for initial priorities when they meet on March 24th. Members noted it would be important to engage the public that has been displaced due to Hurricane Ian.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mr. Mazany reviewed the main responsibilities of the Branch including the development of the community engagement plan, initial branch priorities, and the branch action plan. Branch support staff also reviewed the requirements of Sunshine Law.

Initial Branch Priorities Discussion

Mr. Mazany facilitated the discussion on Initial Branch Priorities. The following topics were discussed by members:

Initial Branch Priorities:

- Direct actions to improve hydrological and ecological conditions:
 - Beach renourishment and dune restoration
 - 10-mile canal
 - Water quality and quantity
 - Bridges and the effect on hydrology
 - Septic to sewer conversion
 - Access to natural resources; both commercial, construction and public access
 - Working waterfronts
 - Natural resources and relationship with tourism
 - Land conservation
 - Stormwater storage
 - Natural resources as economic resources
 - Seagrass, oyster reef, and mangrove restoration
 - Strengthening coastline
 - Re-vegetation
 - Voluntourism
 - Fisheries (commercial fishing/ shrimping industry)
 - Harmful algal blooms
 - Survey existing data and regional/ local plans and projects
- Regulatory actions and incentives to address impact on natural resources:
 - Green development, low- impact development
 - Reducing fertilizer use
 - Stilt homes and discouraging other building methods to prevent flooding
 - Styrofoam insulation standards
 - Recommendations to preserve, conserve, rehabilitate, and restore natural resources
- Public education and awareness campaigns to reduce impact on natural resources:

- Public education campaigns on nature-based solutions
- Private property guidelines

Mr. Mazany reminded the Branch of the resources, especially from the relationship between FGCU, Hagerty, and the Collaboratory, to support the ideas and framework developed by the Branch.

Branch Community Engagement Strategy Discussion

Mr. Mazany presented opportunities for community engagement in the Recovery and Resilience Planning process including, On the Table (OTT) community dialogues, public meetings, public workshops, social media, online surveys and regular Branch meetings and town hall events. Mr. Heere described how public workshops will occur and bring in Subject Matter Experts (SME), including county and municipal experts, to provide information. Additionally, the importance of keeping the public aware was underscored. Mr. Mazany noted that this is a medium-term effort followed by a long-term implementation. The first opportunity is the On the Table (OTT) community dialogues. Mr. Mazany stated that Zoom meetings could be an option.

It is also important to engage SMEs who understand green development techniques. Branch Members also discussed engaging Boca Grande and Bonita Springs due to their proximity to the water. Branch Members mentioned that FGCU has developed a list of stakeholders for Sanibel and Captiva in Resiliency Planning Document/ Vulnerability.

Branch Members agreed about the importance of talking with other branches since work is interconnected and initiatives will be collaborative. Additionally, opportunities to collaborate amongst community organizations were agreed upon to make it easier to obtain funding.

Next Steps

Branch Members discussed the schedule of meetings and possible locations such as Sanibel and Captiva for a potential site of a meeting. Members discussed that Fridays would be the best days to accommodate schedules for the members.

Public Comment

No public comment request.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Mazany thanked the Branch Leads for their participation. Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. on March 17, 2023.