

**Nassau County Board of County Commissioners  
Workshop Session, November 22, 2016 1:00 p.m.  
Commission Chambers, 96135 Nassau Place, Yulee, Florida**

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**Commissioners:**

**Present:** Chairman Daniel B. Leeper, Commissioners Steve W. Kelley, Pat Edwards, Justin Taylor, and George V. Spicer.

**Other Officials Present:** Michael S. Mullin, County Attorney and Ted Selby, County Manager.

**Staff Present:** Shanea Jones, Assistant County Manager, Justin Stankiewicz, Office of Management and Budget Director; Taco Pope, Planning and Economic Opportunity Director; and representing the Clerk's office Connie Arthur and Peggy Snyder, Deputy Clerks.

**Purpose:**

To discuss the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA) Stewardship District.

**DISCUSSION**

**WS161122** - Chair Leeper announced the tragic death of one of the County's Law Enforcement Officers today and issued the following statement:

*"On behalf of Nassau County Commission, we offer our sincere condolences to Officer Eric Oliver's family and to all the men and women of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office. Officer Oliver's tragic death is a stark reminder of the danger the brave men and women in Law Enforcement face every day to keep our communities safe. We will always remember his dedication to protect and serve the people of Nassau County."*

Chair Leeper requested that everyone rise for a moment of silence to honor Officer Oliver.

Chair Leeper reminded the Board that this was a workshop session; therefore, the Board would take no action.

Regarding public input, Carlos Slay came forward to speak in opposition to the ENCPA Stewardship. Wes White, Janie Thomas and Tim Peak requested to speak following presentation by Radiant Properties + Places. Ms. Thomas and Mr. Peak had their concerns addressed later in the meeting.

Regarding discussion of the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA) Stewardship District, Mr. Mullin explained that this workshop session was to allow the representatives from Radiant Places + Properties to provide a presentation to the Board regarding the Stewardship District which is allowed by Legislation in the State of Florida. He added that there are approximately seven or eight other Stewardship Districts in the State. The ENCPA Stewardship District requires a local bill passed by the County's local Legislative Delegation represented by State Representative Cord Byrd and Senator Aaron Bean. The bill will then be introduced into the State Legislative session for consideration.

Mr. Mullin explained that there are two documents before the Board. The document titled *Draft Legislation* is underlined in black and is supplemented by the version with blue lettering which was updated on Monday, November 14, 2016. Many of the changes to both drafts were made as a result of meetings with representatives from Radiant Places + Properties, staff, and himself in order to address certain issues.

Mr. Mullin advised that the *Draft Legislation* has been set again for public hearing on November 28, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. Members of the public will be welcome to provide their feedback. The local Legislative Delegation will conduct another public hearing on December 1, 2016 here in the Commission Chambers at which time Representative Byrd and Senator Bean will take additional public input.

Charles Adams, Vice President of Community Development for Radiant Places + Properties, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rayonier, came forward and introduced Jonathan Johnson, attorney with Hopping Green and Sams, P.A., Tallahassee, Florida, who drafted this bill for Radiant Places +

Properties and who also met with County staff on the revisions. Mr. Adams and Mr. Johnson provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Adams pointed out the map of the 24,000 acre Sector Plan known as the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA). The ENCPA was approved in 2011 following many meetings with the boards, staff and the public and is consistent with the County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Adams provided an overview of the Sector Plan noting that in 2013, Fishkind & Associates, Inc. completed a Fiscal Impact Study indicating that upon build-out of the ENCPA, it will have produced over 20,000 permanent jobs and \$12 million per year net fiscal benefit to the County. The Employment Center Detailed Specific Area Plan (DSAP) was also approved in 2013. This is currently the area where construction, known as Wildlight Village, is underway. In 2015, Rayonier donated a 27-acre site in the Wildlight Village to the Nassau County Public School District for an elementary school with 800 student capacity. The Wildlight Elementary School and the roadway to the school are currently under construction and scheduled to open in August 2017. Rayonier has also commenced construction of their new global headquarters in the Village of Wildlight relocated from Jacksonville and Fernandina Beach.

Mr. Adams referenced an important characteristic of the ENCPA, the landmark Conservation Habitat Network which encompasses approximately fifty percent of the 24,000 acres of land. This network is made up of wetland areas and uplands and will mitigate some of the impacts to the wetlands for future crossings within the ENCPA. An analysis of the future Conservation Habitat Network was conducted and Rayonier looked for alternatives for long term care and maintenance of those lands including the trails and roadways that crisscross the habitat network. Following research, it was found that the State of Florida's Stewardship District legislation would provide the best solution to achieve the immediate and long term public/private set of goals envisioned by the County and Rayonier.

Mr. Johnson, whose firm has had more dealings with the bill to date for Stewardship Districts and special districts in the State of Florida, came forward for further discussion. He noted that the legislation they are seeking during the 2017 Florida Legislative Session would create the 24,000

acre ENCPA Stewardship District prior to residents purchasing homes and moving into the ENCPA beginning in 2017. He provided an overview of some of the other large Florida communities that have successfully implemented similar districts such as Lakewood Ranch, Ave Maria, Babcock Ranch, and Viera. These communities all share the same characteristics such as a large, long-term development plan with environmentally sensitive conservation areas as well as the need to coordinate over the long term with the local government. Before the Stewardship District, dozens of Community Development Districts (CDDs) were the traditional special purpose entity used to manage and finance basic services for community development and infrastructure financing. Reliance upon multiple community development districts (CDDs) to provide these services to the ENCPA would be inefficient for both the landowner and the County. He added that Nassau County already has six CDD's approved and operating: Amelia Concourse, Amelia Walk, Amelia National, Chandler's Meadow, Heron Isles, and River Glen. The Stewardship District will function as one large CDD.

Mr. Johnson provided a summary of the Stewardship District benefits. The Stewardship District does not replace County services or taxes nor does it create any burden obligation on taxpayers outside the District. The District can only assess its own residents. In addition, Mr. Johnson advised that all Nassau County laws, regulations, ordinances and permitting processes remain in place and continue to control the development of lands within the proposed District. A Stewardship District provides one consolidated point of contact for Nassau County for dealing with enhanced services, interlocal agreements, mutual cooperation, and shared use of facilities.

Mr. Johnson responded to several concerns regarding Stewardship Districts. He explained that the County will continue to receive all property taxes, fees and other revenue they otherwise would from these lands. The District cannot supplant any County codes, regulations, or permitting authority. The boundaries of the District can only be expanded with the County's consent. There will not be a new "town" created by the ENCPA Stewardship District special act; this legislation only creates a special taxing district, much like a large CDD, to provide improvements and services needed for the approved development plan. Mr. Johnson explained that the District will finance

infrastructure and enhancements for recreational purposes using revenue bonds secured only by special assessments on the land within the District.

Next, Mr. Johnson provided the proposed timeline for the approval of the Stewardship District noting that a letter of "No Objection" will be before this Board for consideration at the November 28<sup>th</sup> regular session. He requested the Board's approval of this letter because on December 1, 2016, there will be a public hearing with the local Legislative Delegation. His hope is to file the bill with the State Legislature in February 2017 for their consideration sometime between March and May 2017 and then send it to the Governor for consideration in May 2017.

Mr. Adams explained that last year this Board approved a "No Objection" letter based upon the draft of the bill. Attached to that bill was the legal description that covers the 24,000 acres of the ENCPA. Following a detailed review of the legal descriptions, it was found that there were a few errors in the legal description as well as a couple pieces of property that in the long term should be included that this Stewardship District overlay can help maintain. He pointed out that along the riverfront there are some marsh lands that Rayonier owns that had not been included in the legal description. In order to avoid "land-locking" these parcels and have them under the stewardship of the district in the future, it is proposed to have these marsh lands included. Their land use is either Conservation or Agriculture (AG) for silviculture with no development potential. It was also found that Crandall Road had not been originally included in the ENCPA legal description; most likely due to the perception that it is a public road. In the title work, Crandall Road is technically owned by Rayonier although it is treated as a public road. The Stewardship would provide a future maintenance of this road. In addition, the Wildlight Elementary School should be excluded from the legal description because of its donation to Nassau County School District along with the portion of the access road leading to it.

Mr. Adams summarized the Stewardship District by noting that it puts infrastructure decisions related to ENCPA into the public domain; and a Stewardship District must be fiscally responsible, environmentally beneficial, with efficient governance providing the ability to fund, construct, operate and maintain critical ecosystems and

infrastructure. It was noted that all Stewardship District board meetings will be in the public domain and operate under the Sunshine laws. The infrastructure under the management and ownership of the Stewardship District must be public; there is no ability to limit public access to those assets. Most importantly, he added, the ENCPA Stewardship District is a critical implementation step in Rayonier/Nassau County Public Private Partnership.

Representatives from Rayonier as well as staff responded to questions posed by the board members. Chair Leeper pointed out that there will be additional opportunities for public input as this bill moves forward.

The following citizens came forward to voice concerns regarding the Stewardship District: Wes White and Barbara Adams. Mr. Adams, Mr. Johnson and staff responded to their questions. Discussion followed regarding the bond process for infrastructure; whether this District was under the purview of the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Department of Environmental Protection; and sovereign immunity for Districts; and the Stewardship District boundaries.

Mr. Mullin explained that many changes were made to the draft legislative bill according to input he passed on to Radiant Places + Properties from the commissioners. Mr. Mullin advised that there will be recreational lands available within the ENCPA and this language has been reinforced in the current legislation. As an example, the Stewardship District would have the ability by its own authority to assess the property owners within the ENCPA to enhance public recreational lands. The Stewardship District will provide enhanced funds to address the public properties for recreation for residents inside and outside the ENCPA. Mr. Mullin also advised that there will be a public boat ramp within the ENCPA on the river.

Commissioners welcomed newly-elected Commissioner Justin Taylor to the Board.

There being no further business, the workshop session of the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners adjourned at 2:01 p.m.

Daniel B. Leeper, Chairman

Attest:

John A. Crawford, Ex-Officio Clerk