

OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY



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Danny Fullwood – Chairman, District 2
Justin Taylor – Secretary/Treasurer, District 3
Ray Nelson – Commissioner, District 4
Mike Cole – Commissioner, District 5

OHPA/COFB Joint Workshop Minutes

January 11, 2023

The Ocean Highway and Port Authority of Nassau County hosted a Joint Workshop with the City of Fernandina Commission on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at the Fernandina Beach Police Department, 1525 Lime Street, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairman Fullwood.

In attendance on behalf of the City of Fernandina Beach Commission: Mayor Bradley Bean, Vice Mayor David Sturges, Commissioner Darron Ayscue, and Commissioner Chip Ross.

In attendance on behalf of OHPA: Chairman Danny Fullwood, Vice Chairperson Miriam Hill, Commissioner Mike Cole, Commissioner Ray Nelson, Commissioner Justin Taylor, Port Attorney Patrick Krechowski, and Port Executive Director David Kaufman.

Chairman Fullwood introduced Justin Cole, RS&H/Project Manager, for a presentation. It included updates and explanations for the following items: (pdf versions of the presentation available on OHPA's website, portoffernandina.org)

1. Stakeholder and Public coordination

Past and future meetings and workshops were discussed. Mr. Cole emphasized public involvement throughout the process of preparing the Master Plan was a priority.

2. Florida Statutes and City Comprehensive Plan checklists

Requirements were incorporated in the Master Plan respective of the 2022 Florida Statutes Title XXII, Chapter 311.14-Seaport Planning and the COFB Comprehensive Plan; specifically, Policy 5P.04.03 (truck queuing). The current Port Operator is in the process of considering many different options to mitigate the truck traffic issue.

3. 5-year Capital Improvement Program

Port projects and descriptions were listed.

4. Major takeaways (2023-2033 Summary Master Plan)

2023-2033 Port Master Plan summary was discussed.

5. Process going forward

Future dates to submit drafts and final version of the Master Plan to the OHPA Commission, Stakeholder Committee, and the COFB Commission for review/approval/adoption, respectively, were discussed.

6. Questions and Answers session

Mr. Kaufman acknowledged the strong teams of industry experts behind the production of the Master Plan draft. He and Chairman Fullwood welcomed the City's concerns and feedback.

Mayor Bean thanked the OHPA Board for accepting citizen's feedback. He reiterated the Port does not plan to expand its current footprint. He inquired about how the Port will mitigate the truck traffic on Dade Street into the future. Mr. Cole explained there are multiple Port properties in the area and perhaps schedule certain operations accordingly to avoid backups on Dade. Commissioner Nelson added the Port utilized escorts with TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Credential) cards to move and minimize traffic. Federal law permits one escort per five individuals within the terminal.

Vice Mayor Sturges reported receiving complaints in the past pertaining to the early morning truck traffic before 5 AM. Also of concern is the cruise terminal. He explained the City currently accepts small cruise ships at the marina. He asked to verify the size of the cruise ships that will come to the Port. It was explained the majority will contain less than 500 passengers for port of calls in Fernandina. The Port expects to accept cruises once a month and not on a weekly basis. He thanked OHPA for considering public feedbacks.

Commissioner Ayscue echoed both the Mayor and Vice Mayor's sentiments for the "no expansion" plan of the Port footprint. He thanked OHPA for taking that matter into consideration. He asked if there is a possibility to have both cruise and cargo ships in operation at the same time at the Port in consideration of traffic congestion. Commissioner Nelson explained such scenario is verified via the Coast Guard and there is a Facility Security Plan (FSP) in place with security considered.

Commissioner Ross reminded the Board he sent a questionnaire (40 page of questions) on November 28, 2022, and he never heard back from the OHPA Board. Some items he highlighted were as follow:

- Many buses to accommodate 500 passengers
- The Plan is a wish-list. Strategies that identify specific projects/plans are missing from the document.
- Port of Fernandina plans/goals for economic development and projected schedules for attainment of each of the goals.
- Projected infrastructure improvements over the next 10 years.
- Land use and inventory map included in the Plan
- Escambia Street is removed from any considerations
- Class C ships are removed from any considerations
- Storm water plan included in the Master plan
- 100-year flood plan (Flood Resiliency study by the State DOT on behalf of OHPA)

- No large dredging project commitments
- Additional warehousing for growth included in the Master Plan
- Barriers for West Rock and Rayonier
- Dade Street flood zone

Mr. Kaufman explained there needs to be an understanding of the Port's market environment. From his experience with larger ports, the Port Master Plan is visionary and goal-setting. Detail-oriented reports are composed according to the market demands when necessary. It is a market-driven environment. Furthermore, a 50,000 sq. ft. building is planned on the north and east portion of the terminal with funding from grants, port Operator contribution, and business operations revenue.

Commissioner Ross asked if OHPA would consider using its empty parking lot as a business opportunity for overflow parking for City events and/or the Cumberland ferry. Chairman Fullwood answered that OHPA will consider. Commissioner Ross requested a copy of the Master Plan draft be sent via the City Clerk.

In closing, each City Commissioner offered their summations and appreciations. Vice Mayor Sturges reiterated he understands the changing market demands, the whole island and state are in a flood zone, and appreciates the new Port Operator's work to make changes. Mayor Bean inquired about gate-scheduling software for the Dade truck traffic. He thanked the Board for incorporating the City Commission in the schedule. Commissioner Ayscue conveyed his gratitude to the Board. It is an opportunity for OHPA and the City to work together. Commissioner Ross conveyed his sincere appreciation for all the work. He added the current Port Operator has exceeded his expectations. He requested a future workshop, perhaps in February/March, to further discuss particular items for the Master Plan. Chairman Fullwood concurred.

The consensus from the OHPA Board is appreciation and gratitude for attending and providing comments for the Master Plan. The need to listen and consider what the public has to say is a pertinent part of the Master Plan. In addition, gratitude was given to the Stakeholder committee for their work and dedication. The Master Plan is still in draft form and continues to be composed.

Adjourn

With no other questions brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6 PM.



Danny Fullwood, Chairman

01-25-2023

Date