

OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY



Port of Fernandina

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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

Fernandina Beach City Commission
Ocean Highway and Port Authority (OHPA)
Joint Workshop Minutes
Resiliency Plan

July 12, 2023

The Ocean Highway and Port Authority (OHPA) of Nassau County and the City of Fernandina Beach City Commission held a Joint Workshop, Wednesday, July 12, 2023, in Chambers of the City Commission, 204 Ash Street, Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034.

The joint meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

In attendance on behalf of the City of Fernandina Beach: Mayor Bradley Bean, Commissioner Chip Ross, Commissioner Darron Ayscue, City Attorney Tammi Bach, and City Engineer Charles George. Vice Mayor David Sturges and Commissioner James Antun were not in attendance. Roll call was conducted by City Clerk Caroline Best.

In attendance on behalf of OHPA: Chairman Danny Fullwood, Vice Chairwoman Miriam Hill, Secretary/Treasurer Justin Taylor, Commissioner Ray Nelson, Commissioner Mike Cole, Port Executive Director David Kaufman, and Port Operator Butch Gilbert. Port Attorney Patrick Krechowski and Port Accountant Pierre LaPorte were not in attendance. Roll call was conducted by Administrative Office Manager Rossana Hebron.

OHPA Secretary/Treasurer Justin Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bean called the Joint Workshop to order by introducing the specific topic of Resiliency efforts for both the government entities. He thanked the participants for the presentation.

Discussion

4.1 Chairman Fullwood introduced Port Executive Director, David Kaufman, to begin the Resiliency Plan presentation and introduce the speaker/consultant, James McDonald,

HNTB Project Manager. Mr. Kaufman recalled the inception of the Resiliency plan began after the Port sustained some impacts last fall when a storm passed the area.

FDOT provided funding for the preparation of a Resiliency study for the Port. Mr. Kaufman, on behalf of OHPA, ensured the scope included close coordination with the City. The State hired the consultant, HNTB, and is managing the study. OHPA serves as a local coordinator. Along with Kelly Gibson and staff, they ensure the efforts align with those of the City's. Subsequently, if the plans align with the City's and State's, there will be funding opportunities for all.

Mr. McDonald thanked the City Commission and OHPA for the opportunity to present the Resiliency Plan and collaborate. He explained the project overview is to provide FDOT and the Port a comprehensive resource describing existing conditions, documenting impacts, determining vulnerabilities, providing infrastructure mitigation plan, intergovernmental coordination, and opportunities for project funding and implementation. Hence; the Port, its operations, and its tenants can be more effective in their business.

Mr. McDonald's organization is collaborating with the City's consultants to ensure their respective plans align with each other and that of the State's to be considered for federal funding.

He explained resilience is planning and preparations for potential and future impacts. Resilience is the capacity to withstand or recover from shocks and stresses. It is definitely not sustainability. Events such as hurricanes, storm surge, tornados, earthquakes, fires, or sudden economic/societal issues are considered "shocks". Chronic conditions such as sea-level rise, repeated flooding, King tide, climate change, degrading economic/societal conditions are considered "stresses".

He introduced related federal and State efforts via Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Act (PROTECT)- federal. The FDOT Long-term Resiliency Commitment is coordinated by Jennifer Carver, Prepared Resiliency Action Plan 2023 (RAP). Resiliency is important to FDOT that it is a part of FDOT's compass; which are focus areas that navigate Florida's transportation system. 4 of the 6 elements (Safety, Communities, Resiliency, and robust supply chains) that drive FDOT are met by preparing a resiliency Plan for the Port of Fernandina.

Mr. McDonald explained the scope overview of the Resiliency Plan. They are: meetings with client and stakeholder, Impacts assessment, GAP analysis and vulnerability assessment, Infrastructure Mitigation Plan, Intergovernmental coordination, and Plan implementation.

He highlighted a map designating the Port terminal existing conditions that can potentially create issues. He demonstrated a sea-level rise, not storm surge, up to 9 feet to create a case for strategic planning to mitigate impacts at the Port.

There are multiple funding opportunities via FEMA, related port security programs, electrical/mechanical/drainage related, connectivity with the railway system, and the like.

In sum, Mr. McDonald listed the on-going activities and coordination; specifically, with the City of Fernandina Beach Resiliency Plan, FDOT and RAP, Port-wide vulnerability and GAP assessments, railroad impacts (G&W First Coast Railroad), and mill site impacts. Incidentally, the mills are more concerned about how they will be impacted business-wise by the Port and railroad. He plans to meet with Federal, State, and local agencies and work on Infrastructure Mitigation Plan.

Chairman Fullwood inquired how the Port and the City benefit financially by collaborating with their respective Resiliency Plan. Mr. McDonald explained from the Port's perspective, it is pertinent to coordinate with the City, and the City, in turn, adopts the Port's Plan to take advantage of the local match funding. The respective plans do not necessarily have to be combined, just coordinated or accepted.

Mayor Bean stated he is interested in assisting the Port and ensure it stays resilient. Mr. Kaufman explained the City and the Port can maintain on-going coordination and working collectively to assist each other. He hopes to keep the City abreast with all the Port's plans, share information, and not be blind-sided with a finished product/plan.

Commissioner Ross stated the railroad is essential to the Port and mills operation. Mr. McDonald explained their scope of the project only includes the area near the Port. It does not extend into the City area. Per the railroad, their main issue lies on the corridor that bisects the Port. He continues to communicate with the railroad.

With no other questions from the City Commission and OHPA, the Mayor thanked Mr. McDonald for his presentation.

Public Comments

Mayor Bean opened the floor for public comments.

Margaret Kirkland, Chairwoman Conserve Nassau, stated there is concern about resiliency, sea-level rise, climate change, and the like. She expressed her appreciation for the City's and OHPA's joint efforts, initiating communications and collaborations on the resiliency topic.

Lorelei Jacobs, City Grants Administrator, reminded on the next City Commission agenda is the Resiliency grant by NOAA. It funds a minimum of \$15M and up to \$17M, highly competitive. Only 15 projects will be chosen nationwide. She suggested it would provide funding for the City's Resiliency repair along the seawall by the Port, \$75M. It requires port and railroad support. Mayor Bean concurred.

Mayor Bean called on each Commissioner to provide comments.

OHPA Commissioners:

Commissioner Taylor agreed it is great to start the collaboration between the two entities. He thanked the Mayor and the City Commission for the opportunity. He thanked those who attended the joint meeting.

Chairman Fullwood thanked the Mayor and the City Commission for hosting the joint meeting. He added it is important for the City to know the Port's Resiliency Plan, and OHPA will continue to coordinate with the City.

Vice Chairwoman Hill volunteered to attend any meetings/workshops when necessary.

Commissioner Cole concurred and volunteered his time as well. He thanked the Mayor and the City Commission for the joint effort.

Commissioner Nelson thanked the Mayor for his cooperation and the gathering of the other Commissioners. As the former Terminal Manger for Worldwide, he experienced and persevered through the high-water impact at the Port. Anything to alleviate the impacts at the Port is greatly appreciated.

City Commission:

Commissioner Ross declined to comment.

Commissioner Ayscue stated he is excited and encouraged the City and OHPA are working together well. He offered his assistance.

Mayor Bean acknowledged the start of collaboration between the two groups. He hopes to continue the work moving forward.

Adjournment

With no other questions/comments brought before the City Commission and OHPA, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 PM.


Justin Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer

8-09-2023
Date