



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY – PUNTA GORDA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

MINUTES OF THE MPO BOARD MEETING, DECEMBER 19, 2016
MURDOCK ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE, ROOM #119
PORT CHARLOTTE FL 33948

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Christopher Constance, Charlotte County Commissioner
Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch, Charlotte County Commissioner
Commissioner Ken Doherty, Charlotte County Commissioner
Commissioner James Herston, Charlotte County Airport Authority
Councilmember Nancy Prafke, Punta Gorda City Council

ADVISORY

Bessie Reina, Alternate for FDOT District One Secretary L.K. Nadam

STAFF PRESENT

Bob Herrington, MPO Director
Gary Harrell, MPO Principal Planner
Laks Gurram, MPO Planner II
Wendy Scott, MPO Planner II
Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT

Joshua B. Moye, Assistant Charlotte County Attorney (MPO Legal Services)
Lori Carlton, FDOT
John Burrage, CAC Chair
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda Urban Design/TAC Chair
Peter Gerhardt, Legislative Affairs REC
Emily Lewis, County Legislative Manager

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

MPO Chair Christopher Constance called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. A roll call was taken, and the Chair noted that all members were present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was recited.

3. Addition and/or Deletion to the Agenda

Commissioner Herston noted that there were four technical corrections needed to the agenda packet to properly identify the Lee MPO Board (*instead of the Lee/Collier MPO Board*).

Commissioner Doherty made a motion to approve the corrections. Commissioner Deutsch seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

4. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on agenda items.

5. Election of 2017 Officers

Joshua Moye requested nominations for MPO Chair.

Commissioner Doherty nominated Commissioner Deutsch as MPO Chair, effective January 1, 2017. Commissioner Herston seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mr. Moye requested a vote on the motion nominating Commissioner Deutsch as MPO Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

Joshua Moye requested nominations for MPO Vice Chair.

Commissioner Doherty nominated Commissioner Constance as MPO Vice Chair, effective January 1, 2017. Commissioner Herston seconded the nomination. Commissioner Deutsch nominated Commissioner Herston. The nomination failed for lack of a second. Mr. Moye requested a vote on the motion nominating Commissioner Constance as MPO Vice Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

Joshua Moye requested nominations for the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) Representative.

Commissioner Doherty nominated Commissioner Herston as MPOAC Representative. Commissioner Constance seconded the nomination. Mr. Moye requested a vote on the motion nominating Commissioner Herston as MPOAC Representative. The motion carried unanimously.

Joshua Moye requested nominations for Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) Representative Alternate.

Commissioner Deutsch nominated Commissioner Doherty as MPOAC Representative Alternate. Councilmember Prafke seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mr. Moye requested a vote on the motion nominating Commissioner Doherty as Alternate MPOAC Representative. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Chairs' Reports:

A. MPO Board Chair's Report

Commissioner Constance noted that despite success on the Burnt Store Road and US 17 improvements, he was frustrated by inaction on needed improvements to CR 74, especially at the intersection with SR 31. He noted a recent fatality at that location and stated that there was a need for a roundabout at the intersection of this major east-west commercial pipeline. He emphasized that the road must be completed, but not at the expense of Charlotte County. Commissioner Doherty recalled how in the mid-1970s, FDOT had given many of the State Roads numbered in the seventy series to the impacted Counties along with the accompanying revenues. He cited other state roads such as SR 60 and SR 80 which had been retained by the State. The intersection was the most dangerous in Charlotte County at that time, and Glades County had erected a barricade in protest on the same roadway. Commissioner Constance noted that Charlotte County had improved drainage, and elevated/enhanced the roadway, and those figures should be provided. He described a conversation with Palm Beach County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay, who was amazed that this roadway was not designated as a state road. He stated that he would like the details on the fairness of this issue.

Commissioner Deutsch noted that it is imperative that FDOT assist now to make traffic flow more smoothly on US 41 given the left turn issue at Murdock Circle. He stated that this was a serious issue which must be addressed. Bob Harrington noted that Charlotte County Staff is working with FDOT to adjust signal sequence to let through traffic more first. Commissioner Constance noted that this had been done temporarily, but once construction crews took over, the sequence had been changed back. He noted that assistance was needed through the April tourist season. Commissioner Deutsch stated that FDOT is doing a good job with working at night on the US 41 project. Commissioner Constance recognized the good work, but reiterated that some longstanding problems remain.

7. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary's Report **(Update and discussion on local issues)**

Bessie Reina announced that due to FDOT staff changes, Lori Carlton will now be the fulltime liaison to the new Heartland TPO. D'Juan Harris will be the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO new FDOT liaison.

Lori Carlton stated that she has enjoyed working with everyone in Charlotte County and looks forward to seeing Charlotte County officials and staff at some of the district and statewide meetings. She wished everyone happy holidays. She followed up on Councilmember Cavanaugh's question regarding the draft Sun Trail agreement. She noted that funding had been obtained for the design portion and had been sent out a month ago. She stated that construction is slated for 2019.

Commissioner Constance stated that he had enjoyed working with Ms. Carlton and thanked her for her efforts on behalf of Charlotte County. A discussion arose regarding ongoing issues at the intersection of Murdock Circle at US 41 regarding left turn lane stacking. Commissioner Herston noted that the intersection doesn't need a timing adjustment, but rather it is a storage issue. Ms. Carlton stated that FDOT was not doing a study but rather an intersection improvement at that location.

8. Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes: October 24, 2016 Meeting**
- B. Approval of Minutes: November 18, 2016 Joint Charlotte – Lee MPO Board Meeting**
- C. Citizens Advisory Committee Reappointments**
- D. Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Reappointments**
- E. Charlotte County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB) Appointment**

Commissioner Doherty made the Motion to approve the entire Consent Agenda, and Commissioner Deutsch seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Doherty thanked all of the individuals who have volunteered to participate on the CAC, BPAC and LCB.

Commissioner Constance stated that he had reviewed the minutes of the Joint Meeting with the Lee MPO, and he was curious about the Burnt Store Road improvements on the Lee side of the County Line in the Burnt Store Marina area. He requested followup on this subject. Councilmember Prafke suggested that perhaps new EDOT liaison Mr. Harris could report back on this matter sooner than the next MPO Board Meeting on March 6, 2017.

9. Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Appointment

Ballots were issued to MPO Board Members to vote for one of the two interested individuals for the Mid County CAC position. Following the vote, Bob Herrington announced the results: 3 votes for Ms. Quilty and 2 votes for Ms. Drinkwater.

Commissioner Doherty made a motion to approve Ms. Quilty as the Mid-County Representative to the CAC. Commissioner Deutsch seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Bob Herrington stated that whenever there is an appointment vote, the applications of individuals who are not selected are kept on file, so that they may be notified of future vacancies.

10. 2017 Legislative Position Statement

Commissioner Ken Doherty requested that language be added to the Legislative Position Statement regarding the ability to provide funding flexibility to local governments. The members agreed with the concept by consensus. Commissioner Herston inquired about the possibility of including the airport. Bob Herrington noted that the word aviation had been used in the prior year's statement. Commissioner Constance observed that the appropriate wording might be in the area of the fourth bullet from the bottom. Bob Herrington stated that he will make certain under the flexibility section to include aviation. He noted that he had reviewed other local legislative statements for uniformity.

Commissioner Deutsch made a motion to approve the draft 2017 Legislative Position Statement, authorizing its distribution to the area's Legislative Delegation and others as well as the proposed changes suggested. Commissioner Doherty seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

11. Public Comments

John Burrage, CAC Chair, thanked the MPO Board Members for approving the CAC appointment/reappointments and wished everyone seasons' greetings.

12. Staff Comments

Bob Herrington reviewed a list of recent staff activities. He announced the upcoming MPOAC training. He stated that the Coordinated Urban Transportation Studies (CUTS) meeting would be held on January 31, 2017 in Manatee County. Per a suggestion from Commissioner Doherty, MPO Chairs would be invited to attend. Commissioner Constance stated that bringing all interested MPO Chairs to meet together for discussion of common issues is a good idea.

13. Member Comments

Commissioner Deutsch noted that this MPO had been instrumental in building regional bridges and linkages by making cooperative efforts in the right direction. He thanked Commissioner Constance for his leadership as Chair and stated that he was glad to have Commissioner Herston continuing to attend the MPOAC. He described the value of the MPOAC training session which occurs over a weekend, stating that it was the single hardest working session in which he had ever participated. He noted that there was a great deal of value of which he was unaware, and he would be tempted to attend again. He suggested all MPO board members attend in the future, characterizing the experience as very worthwhile. Bob Herrington inquired if Commissioner Doherty might wish to attend as the MPOAC alternate. Commissioner Doherty stated that he would like to see material regarding the training. Bob Herrington noted that it would be beneficial to allow staff to be trained as well. Commissioner Deutsch thanked everyone for selecting him as the 2017 MPO Chair. He wished everyone a blessed holiday season.

Commissioner Herston wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He thanked the MPO staff and said that he likes dropping in to see them at the MPO Office. Commissioner Herston gave the Airport report noting that the November passenger total of 96,200 was a 35.43% increase over November 2015. He said that the year to date figure was a 33% increase. There was a 1,011,000 passenger count for the year. He stated that there is a gradual increase in funding eligibility in light of these increases. He noted that Frontier Airlines had 10,000 passengers in its first month of service to Punta Gorda. Commissioner Deutsch described a past attempt to provide service to and from the area of New York and/or New England. Commissioner Herston noted that the problem with such a service was often at the other end with gate fees, etc. Commissioner Deutsch stated that a good possibility was a landing strip in North Kings Town, Rhode Island which had been explored previously. Commissioner Herston noted that that this potential route could be further explored.

Commissioner Constance wants to add permanently an Airport Item onto the agenda with any needed attachments following the FDOT report.

Councilmember Prafke stated that she enjoys being on the MPO Board. She stated that she has worked with MPO staff previously as a member of Team Punta Gorda. She looks forward to the MPO members working together and raising the level of performance. She wished everyone happy holidays.

Commissioner Doherty discussed the recent email from County Legislative Manager Emily Lewis regarding the proposed USDOT rule advertised in the Federal Register regarding MPO Coordination and Reform. Bob Herrington stated that he had just sent MPO Board members the summary. Commissioner Doherty observed that there would be the ability for MPOs to apply for an exemption. He stressed that there would be a need to coordinate and prepare for action early next year. Bob Herrington stated that publication of the rule might be as soon as Saturday, December 24, 2016. He promised to copy members as soon as information is available. Commissioner Doherty stressed the need to coordinate information for visits to state and local officials. He stated that the current coordinating efforts with Lee MPO, Sarasota/Manatee MPO and all of FDOT District One should be acknowledged. Commissioner Doherty thanked Commissioner Constance for his service and wished good luck to Commissioner Deutsch as he becomes MPO Chair. He wished everyone safe holiday travels.

Commissioner Constance congratulated Commissioner Deutsch on becoming MPO Chair. He was glad that Commissioner Herston was remaining as MPOAC Representative. He welcomed Councilmember Prafke, especially in light of the MPO Board's recent successes, citing the example of the pedestrian bridge at Alligator Creek which Councilmember Cavanaugh had pursued after the CAC and BPAC members had identified the issue.

Commissioner Constance provided photographs of two Punta Gorda intersections: Retta Esplanade at US 41 and Nesbit at Marion Avenue (where traffic is not allowed to turn right on red after a full stop at Nesbit turning onto Marion). He cited similarities of both intersections, and requested that FDOT review this issue. He requested that the issue be brought back to the next MPO Board Meeting. Councilmember Prafke seconded his request. Commissioner Constance wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year.

14. Adjournment

MPO Chair Constance adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Joint Meeting with Sarasota/Manatee MPO – Monday, January 23, 2017

Next MPO Board Meeting – Monday, March 6, 2017 at 1:30 pm (new meeting time).