

Pasco County
Food Policy Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2015
10:00am – 12:00pm

Type of Meeting: Workshop ~ Urban Agricultural Ordinance

Location: 8731 Citizens Dr, New Port Richey, FL 34655 – 3rd Floor Room

Meeting Facilitator: Travis Morehead

Invitees: Dr. Dell deChant, Travis Morehead, Deanna Krautner, Dr. Whitney Elmore, Susan (Susie) Hoeller, Susan M. Zanatta, Lester Cypher, Jeff Wright and Fanchone Gude

- I. Call to order – **The meeting was called to order at 10 AM by Travis Morehead.**
- II. Roll call - **ALL FPAC members were present except for Dr. Whitney Elmore. Todd V. Engala, Pasco County Long Range Planning- Planner II was present. In addition, Pasco County Executive Planner, Matthew J. Armstrong and Ms. Judy Geiger, a citizen-cattle rancher from NE Pasco County were in attendance.**
- III. Public Comment – **Ms. Geiger stated that she was attending to learn about FPAC’s work.**
- IV. Review of Current Urban Agriculture Ordinances
 - Dade City Ordinance
 - New Port Richey Ordinance
 - Boston Ordinance
 - Ft Lauderdale Ordinance
 - Alachua County’s Agricultural Use Code

The five ordinances listed above had been distributed to the FPAC members in advance of the meeting as resources and points of comparison for what other jurisdictions in and outside of Florida have promulgated to promote urban agriculture.

The discussion was very active with an excellent exchange of information, ideas and points of view. Details of the five comparative ordinances were discussed.

The following were general points of agreement/consensus that the FPAC members arrived at during the workshop about the new ordinance that FPAC will recommend to Pasco County Commissioners and the County legal staff:

- 1. It will need very precise definitions of terminology so that its coverage and meaning is very clear to all stakeholders. It will also need to be carefully coordinated with the Pasco County land development code.**
- 2. It will not include livestock, chickens and bees but it will include farmed fish. There was no in depth discussion or decision made about rabbits.**
- 3. It will have three (3) categories – urban farms, market gardens and community gardens. Rooftop gardens, vertical gardens, container gardens and aquaponics will be sub-sets of these three categories as applicable.**
- 4. Each category will be specifically defined to include relevant size restrictions and permitted uses, such as sales, bartering, donated food programs, etc.**
- 5. Food safety courses/certifications will be required for certain permitted uses, such as sales (on-site and off-site) and highly recommended for others, such as individual consumption by the farmers themselves. It was noted that “IFAS” (the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) provides reasonably priced food safety courses, which deal with growing, handling, packing, etc.**
- 6. Pesticide and trucking issues will be covered to protect neighbors in conformance with applicable zoning, special use variance processes and nuisance prevention.**

In addition to these points of agreement, there was a lengthy discussion about whether or not the new ordinance would only allow urban agricultural uses that qualify as organic under existing federal and state laws and accredited certification programs. Mr. Morehead and Mr. Dell deChant advocated for this based upon their review of comparative ordinances and more importantly their discussions with community groups and individuals in the organic agricultural movement. The issue of pesticides used in conventional agriculture is one of the concerns expressed by several FPAC members because of the potential impact on neighbors in urban areas. Ms. Hoeller expressed her concern that restricting urban farms, market gardens and community gardens to only use organic farming methods might cause the new ordinance to be challenged/litigated by supporters of conventional farming

methods. This issue will be discussed further at the next meeting and of course, the County legal staff can weigh in.

- V. Create Pasco County Urban Agriculture Ordinance – The time allocated for the workshop was not sufficient for the actual creation of the specific language of the new ordinance. However, all agreed that the workshop was very worthwhile to discuss issues and make the decisions noted above. It was agreed that each FPAC member will submit to Mr. Engala on or before November 30, 2015, their own suggested language for the structure of the new ordinance either by striking through one or more of the comparative ordinances or drafting a new one.**
- VI. Adjournment – The workshop was adjourned at 12 Noon by Mr. Morehead.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Susie Hoeller on November 9, 2015.