

Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2023

Supervisors in Attendance

Mark Proctor, Chair, Supervisor
Ryan Gill– Vice Chair, Supervisor
Chris McCullough – Supervisor(zoom)
Myke Morris- Treasurer, Supervisor
Adam Young - Supervisor

Others in Attendance

Betty Jo Tompkins-HSWCD Executive Director
Linda Chion-HSWCD/PT Computer graphics
Kathy Eckdahl-HSWCD Adm Asst III to Director
Greg Hearing-interim Counsel for HSWCD Board
Leslie Diaz-Alvarez - NRCS District Conservationist
Walter Albarran - NRCS Asst State Conservationist
Melissa Zornitta, Executive Director, Hillsborough
Planning Commission
Simon Bollin-Hills. Ag. Economic Development
Ken Griner – SWFWMD (zoom)
Thomas Stevens – SWFWMD (zoom)
MarDee Buchman-
Aide to Congressman Vern Buchanan CD 16
Melissa Jackson - attendee

Call to Order

PROCTOR, chair, called meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

Guest Speaker Melissa Zornitta from Plan Hillsborough

ZORNITTA presented a comprehensive plan overview of Environmental and Sustainability goals and topic areas. Future land use, Centers, Connections, Transfer of Developmental Rights, Accommodating for Future Land use and other topics were addressed. Presentation was shared with the board. Various dates on specific topics for public meetings are planned. MORRIS, GILL, McCOLLOUGH, and TOMPKINS commented.

MINUTES

Minutes of March 29, 2023 Board meeting were reviewed. On page 4 under paragraph regarding suspension motion corrected to read: McCULLOUGH moved to suspend TOMPKINS with pay until investigation is complete, pending the findings of the County HR investigation. GILL seconded. MORRIS, McCULLOUGH, TOMPKINS commented. Yes - McCULLOUGH; Nea-MORRIS and GILL; Abstained- YOUNG, Chair did not vote. MORRIS moved approval as amended; GILL seconded. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

MORRIS, treasurer, reviewed the financials.

● General bank account	\$1,210.29	Balance as of March 28, 2023
● Hillsborough 100 account	\$9,782.98	Balance as of March 28, 2023
● Mini-Farms account	\$53,329.09	Balance as of March 28, 2023
● Envirothon	\$415.69	Balance as of March 28, 2023

GILL, PROCTOR and TOMPKINS commented. YOUNG moved to accept and file for audit the financial report for March 28, 2023. GILL seconded. Motion passed.

REPORTS

SWFWMD Farms Program

GRINER reported the Farms Program still has funding and encouraged participation.

Hills. Ag. Economic Development

BOLLIN described briefing to BOCC which received positive reception. TOMPKINS commented.

NRCS

DIAZ-ALVAREZ reported there were 7 additional applications to Emergency EQUIP. Classic EQUIP has a total of 44 applications. Encouraged participation.

ALBARRAN shared there are 136 pre-approved Emergency EQUIP applications. 67 contracts are being worked on. CSP has increased participation due to promoting the program. Hired new employee to work in Palmetto Office. ALBARRAN shared information to the board about the new technician position. HSWCD needs to finalize the description of the position. HEARING commented on the paperwork for this position. GILL requested 30 days to provide a job description to NRCS with copies of the information provided to the board. ALBARRAN provided information to the board and communicated the deadline of July 3, 2023 for the submission package for the new technical position. HEARING, McCULLOUGH and TOMPKINS agreed to work on the job description for May 2023 Board meeting.

REQUEST FOR NON AGENDA ITEMS

Plant City Office

GILL commented on the condition of the Plant City office. MORRIS and GILL commented. GILL moved that by May 17, 2023 the Plant City office should be in acceptable order as an official county office. YOUNG seconded. MORRIS, TOMPKINS, and GILL commented. Motion passed.

BUSINESS

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- Update: Farm Bill Position Statement:
Over 250 email packets on HSWCD position statement, fly-in summary and NACD positions on appropriations, budget, general bill requests, forestry and wildfires, wildlife management, and climate change were sent to all Florida Conservation Districts and Supervisors, NACD staff, NRCS and others. Feedback from numerous counties was positive and stated that many other counties would follow HSWCD's lead.
- Florida legislation, requested FDACS legal counsel on SB 1078 legislation opinion.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

- ITF article about Farm Bill position will be published in the May issue.
- April 12, 2023 Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge Kickoff Luncheon was held at The Regent. MORRIS, PROCTOR, TOMPKINS, and HSWCD staff attended. Presenting sponsor was Mosaic Co, Inc. Printing sponsor Odiorne Insurance, Gift Bag Sponsors: over 20 items from commodity groups, fairs, festivals, governmental agencies, and other

groups were provided to all participants. Over 165 attendees representing governmental agencies, judiciary members, chambers of commerce, businesses, civic clubs, youth organizations, and others. Awards were presented for Project of the Year: Hillsborough County Fair, Outstanding Cooperating Partner - EPC Executive Director Janet Lorton and Staff, Outstanding Supporter of the Year: Hills Co Property Appraiser Bob Henriquez and Staff. Awarded Roy Gene Davis Scholarship to Morgan Chancey (Ag Ed) and Michael Hepburn Memorial Scholarship awarded to Madison Leiner (Env. Engineering). Presented 16 mini-grant winners. See agenda for full list. Follow up Thank You correspondence, recognition materials and a newspaper article will be completed. MORRIS, PROCTOR and TOMPKINS all commented positively about the luncheon.

- HSWCD social media and internet was tabled for next board meeting.
- April 12, 2023 TOMPKINS presented program on HSWCD to the Tampa Chapter of the Sierra Club.
- April 13, 2023 TOMPKINS presented Farm Bill issues before the Hills Republican Executive Committee. State Committeeman encouraged Republican Clubs to participate in conservation projects.
- April 18-21, 2023 Spring Ag Venture at the State Fair Grounds. HSWCD staff presenting "Our Perfect Pollinators". "Bees, Bats, Birds, Butterflies - Our Perfect Pollinators" station, demonstrations and snacks.
- April 21, 2023 Plant City Chamber Spring Ag Tour
- May 4, 2023 EPC "Clean Air Fair" - Downtown Tampa
- NACD/HSWCD Poster contest "One Water" is being promoted. Speech contest is on same topic. Deadline for posters: April 28, 2023.
- UPDATE Urban Grant: Joint grant won by City of Tampa, Coalition of Community Gardens and HSWCD has hired a grant coordinator.
- See Agenda for other projects, activities, and events listed.

OTHER BUSINESS

- HSWCD is working on FY23 audit due June 30, 2023.
- GILL commented about projects and activities. TOMPKINS commented. Long term planning was discussed. YOUNG, PROCTOR and GILL commented. YOUNG moved to have the next board meeting on May 17, 2023 at 3 pm at FSGA. GILL seconded. Motion passed. GILL moved for the HSWCD board to meet on June 14, 2023 at 3 pm at FSGA. MORRIS seconded. Motion passed.
- UPDATE on current HSWCD Audit and HSWCD Rules of Procedure HEARING recommended that HSWCD Board adopt procedures related to meetings. TOMPKINS, PROCTOR were sent a formal letter from HEARING about the legislation. HEARING related his legal opinion on the residency issue and district boundaries related to the unbalanced district sizes and how to obtain answers about the statute. TOMPKINS and HEARING reported that FDACS can not render an opinion about the statute. HEARING reported about the two options for resolving this issue: contact Attorney General of FL and/or Contact FL Secretary of State. HEARING stated that there appears to be no residency requirement for HSWCD Supervisors beyond living in the county (district). MORRIS moved to request definitive opinion from the FL Attorney General, if HSWCD does not receive a definitive opinion then proceed immediately to request opinion from the FL Secretary of State or other authority directed by FL Attorney General. GILL seconded. HEARING, MORRIS, TOMPKINS, GILL commented. Motion passed.

- UPDATE: Hillsborough County HR review. HEARING reported that County HR is continuing their investigation. HR will complete a desk audit within the next 2 weeks. Audit will be available at the next board meeting. Other issues were reported to be involved in this situation. Timeline for County HR is 6 months for a full investigation. HEARING recommended an outside investigator to look at other issues to quickly resolve this issue. Interviews will be held with HSWCD employees and Executive Director. YOUNG and MORRIS commented. MORRIS moved for HEARING to hire independent investigators at his discretion to review County HR issues at a cost not to exceed \$8,000.00 dollars unless executive committee approves an amount over the initial cost approved. YOUNG, MORRIS, HEARING, TOMPKINS commented. YOUNG seconded. Motion passed.
- Obtaining procedures was discussed. GILL moved that HEARING help in producing adoptable meeting procedures for HSWCD board meetings. MORRIS seconded. Motion passed.

Next Regular Board meeting May 17, 2023 at 3 pm at FSGA.

MEETING ADJOURNED

DINNER SERVED

These minutes reviewed and edited by:
Betty Jo Tompkins, Executive Director, HSWCD - Florida.

Signed: _____ Date _____