

## **St. Marys River Management Committee**

P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**August 5, 2013**

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its noticed meeting on August 5, 2013, at the Nassau County Building in Callahan, Florida. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed at the end of the minutes. A quorum of members was present.

#### **Call to Order and Housekeeping Items**

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairman Kevin Shell at 7:10 p.m. Members and visitors introduced themselves. The draft agenda was reviewed and approved. Previous meeting minutes from July 1, 2013, were reviewed and amended to correct technical errors. John Myers, committee Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report for June: the committee's main account had a balance of \$5,687.92. Chip Campbell mentioned the committee's P.O. Box, and questioned whether it made financial sense for the committee to continue paying the annual bill (\$54) when the committee receives very little mail. He wondered whether the committee's mail could instead be directed to Charlton County in an effort to save costs. Al Crace, Charlton County Administrator, said that should not be a problem. John Myers made a motion to change the committee's mailing address to the Charlton County BOCC once the current P. O. Box lease expires; the motion was seconded and approved.

#### **Sand Mining Update**

Greg Sheppard provided a personal perspective and update on the Oldcastle sanding mining proposal in Baker County. He said the issue was heard at the July 16 Baker County Commission meeting. There was much public discussion at the meeting, and the end result was that the Commissioners voted against allowing the special exception for the sand mining proposal (the vote was four against and one in favor).

Sheppard said that, in his opinion, Oldcastle had listened to the community's concerns about water withdrawal and discharge, and had mitigated those concerns with an alternative proposal that seemed more environmentally responsible. The alternative proposal was to use the City of Macclenny's wastewater for the mining process, rather than drawing from the aquifer. Additionally, Oldcastle proposed to provide the labor and materials for the infrastructure to bring the wastewater from the city to the mine site. The proposal would have provided the city with water and sewer hookups south of the I-10 & SR228 interchange.

Sheppard felt there was an overwhelming amount of misinformation within the community about the original and revised proposals, as well as about sand mining in general. It was Sheppard's opinion that the misinformation ultimately swayed the public's opinion against the proposal. Sheppard said he felt the county was shortsighted in their decision-making, given the area's need for infrastructure, and considering potential changes with state and federal guidelines for wastewater disposal. Additionally, Sheppard felt that Oldcastle could have done a better job of explaining how they had addressed the public's concerns by having a chart or handout illustrating initial proposal concerns versus the new mitigation plan.

\*Minutes were approved at SMRMC meeting on October 7, 2013.

Kevin Shell said that he represents the City of Macclenny as part of the League of Cities, and said that the City of Macclenny supported Oldcastle's alternative proposal (using the city's wastewater). He agreed with Sheppard that there was much misinformation going around. He said the City is waiting for Oldcastle to decide what their next step will be.

Cory Black questioned if this decision by the Baker County Commission is a sign of the county's unwillingness to consider similar business proposals in the future. He questioned how the county would be able to diversify its tax base now and in the future.

### **Spanish Creek**

Al Crace gave a brief update regarding the status of any grant proposals to address water quality issues in Spanish Creek. Crace said he has not moved forward as of yet, but said he has learned that he needs to contact the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to seek help for a grant proposal to develop an implementation plan for the creek. He explained that Spanish Creek is a complicated system that wraps around several dense, urban areas, so he expects that there might be some water quality issues. Once an implementation plan is completed, then the county (or the committee) could apply for a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant to address the problems found.

Russell Barber said headwaters of Corn House Creek are near a landfill, and he wondered if that creek might have water quality concerns, too. Merrill Varn said that Corn House Creek doesn't have enough impairment issues to be considered for Section 319 funding.

### Subcommittee Updates

#### **Water Quality Subcommittee and Land Use & Planning Subcommittee**

John Myers updated the committee and said Scott Pippin (with the River Basin Center) does have funds available for public outreach efforts at the upcoming Catfish Festival. However, Pippin said he would like to do more brainstorming about the event. Myers said he has not yet purchased a booth for the festival because he's waiting to hear from Pippin about how much funding the River Basin Center will contribute toward the costs. The festival is Labor Day weekend (Saturday August 31 through Monday September 2). Merrill Varn said it might be a good opportunity for the committee to do some public outreach and to educate the community about water quality issues.

The following committee members agreed to help on Saturday morning (8/31): Karen Chisholm, Dean Woehrle, and Merrill Varn. Varn also suggested contacting Jim Wildes and Rick Fry to see if they can help.

Myers said other upcoming opportunities for SMRMC outreach include: Rock Shrimp Festival – first weekend in October; Okefenokee Festival – second weekend in October; Baker County Fair - third weekend in October.

### **Committee Member Updates**

The committee thanked Melinda Granlund for her service with the committee and presented her with a card and gift card. Granlund agreed to assist the committee while they search for a replacement.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

\*Minutes were approved at SMRMC meeting on October 7, 2013.

## **St. Marys River Management Committee Attendance Log – August 5, 2013**

### **Baker County Members**

Kevin Shell  
Greg Sheppard

### **Nassau County Members**

Cory Black  
Winifred Stephenson  
Keith Tindall  
Dean Woehrle

### **Camden County Members**

Karen Chisholm  
John Myers

### **Charlton County Members**

John Meyer, Commissioner  
Russell Barber  
Chip Campbell  
Merrill Varn

### **Non-voting Members**

(none)

**Administrative Assistant** – Melinda Granlund

### **Visitors**

Al Crace, Charlton County  
Steve Nance, Charlton County