



Interoffice Memorandum

August 7, 2023

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings
–AND–
County Commissioners

FROM: Andres Salcedo, P.E., Acting Director *Andrés*
Planning, Environmental, and Development
Services Department

CONTACT PERSON: **Elizabeth R. Johnson, CEP, PWS, MPA, Interim Manager** *[Signature]*
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SUBJECT: September 26, 2023 – Work Session
Wetland Conservation Areas Ordinance – Draft Ordinance
Discussion

Staff are currently reviewing standards and processes to update Chapter 15, Article X – Wetland Conservation Areas Ordinance (Ordinance). Thus far, the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has presented two work sessions on the findings of technical studies to the Board, as summarized below. On April 11, 2023, staff presented a third work session on recommended policy options to help strengthen and improve the Ordinance. Some of the goals of the Ordinance revisions, which the studies are supporting include:

- identify and protect wetlands and surface waters that are most important or valuable,
- balance protections for wetlands with property rights,
- make processes and outcomes more streamlined, predictable and consistent, and
- make the Ordinance less complicated and easier to understand.

On December 13, 2022, EPD presented the Regulatory Framework Study work session. The work session provided an overview of the study; a summary of the findings; feedback received from interviews with regulatory staff of six county governments that do wetland permitting, environmental consultants, and local environmental advocacy organizations; and key takeaways regarding how wetlands are regulated in other jurisdictions.

On January 24, 2023, EPD presented the State of the Wetlands Study work session. The work session provided an overview of the study, a summary of the preliminary findings, a comparison of the historic and current inventory and condition of the County's wetland resources, and evaluation and assessment of changes that have occurred to the County's wetland resources over time.

On April 11, 2023, EPD presented a third work session focusing on ideas and concepts for potential policy changes to get Board direction on approaches to updating the Ordinance. EPD presented an overview of feedback received from the Board during the previous two work sessions as well as potential policies and approaches that could be considered to help strengthen environmental protections and streamline the permitting process.

On September 26, 2023, EPD will present a fourth work session focusing on the initial draft Ordinance. Staff will review significant changes in the Ordinance, including overall structure, key definitions, new permit types and review methodology, upland buffer requirements, changes in mitigation approach, new Special Protection Areas, and other important concepts.

This item is for informational purposes only; no action is required.

ERJ/AS: jk