

SEPTEMBER 26, 2000 - LAND USE MEETING

11:15 a.m. Agenda, Page 11, Item 9.c. - Alternative water sources for Cone Ranch.

Alternative water sources for Cone Ranch. (Water Resource Team)

Chairman Frank wanted to receive comments from members of the public who could not return at the end of the meeting. After Board comments, Mr. Gary Kuhl, Water Resource Team Administrator, said no decision was required currently on any of the projects. The item was on the agenda, because the Board had asked the item to be returned in a timely manner. Commissioner Platt commented that agenda backup indicated staff would need 90 days to obtain information.

Chairman Frank called for public comment. Representing Fair Water Rights, Incorporated (FWR), Mr. Robert Young, 6205 West Knights Griffin Road, Plant City, said over 2,000 members of FWR opposed a wellfield in the Cone Ranch area, were following the issue closely, and would like to be involved as much as possible. FWR had made recommendations to the Water Resource Team about alternative sources, upon which he commented. Mr. Young suggested establishing an aquatic park at Cone Ranch as a recharge area for the upper Hillsborough River to permit more water to be drawn from the reservoir. Commissioner Platt recalled the vote in 1999 to remove Cone Ranch from the list of potable water supply projects. Chairman Frank said the problem was Tampa Bay Water required a new source of water before Cone Ranch could be removed from the list.

Mr. Wayne Wiggins, 6109 West Knights Griffin Road, also a member of FWR, commented there was still a chance for community-based planning in East County, but water was needed. FWR asked everyone to accept responsibility for development and comply with concurrency. He asked that County resources not be destroyed to supply other counties.

Board consensus was to address staff recommendations when the item was resumed at the end of the meeting. Commissioner Norman requested an update on the proposed purchase of wellfields that had not been successful, with ideas about future action. Commissioner Platt noted one of the staff recommendations was to establish the goal of removal of the Cone Ranch wellfield from the list of future potable water supply projects. Although the Board had voted on that before, Commissioner Platt moved to reaffirm the vote. The motion died for lack of a second. Comments followed about whether Commissioner Platt had previously abstained on the issue, and work already done on the item. (Resumed later in the meeting.)

Alternative water sources for Cone Ranch - RESUMED

Chairman Frank assumed the chair. Commissioner Platt clarified comments made earlier in the meeting about her votes on June 13, 2000, and September 16, 1999, regarding Cone Ranch.

Mr. Gary Kuhl, Water Resource Team Administrator, said no action was needed in the meeting. Discussion ensued about whether the Board should discuss and act on the list or continue the

item. Ms. Harvey advised the morning of the October 10, 2000, land use meeting agenda was open. Comments followed about addressing the list. At the request of Commissioner Platt, Assistant County Attorney Rick Muratti would review Tampa Bay Water legal documents regarding the basis of alternative water supply sources. **Commissioner Storms moved to continue to October 10, 2000. Commissioner Norman seconded the motion, which carried five to zero.** (Commissioners Scott and Wacksman had left the meeting.)

OCTOBER 10, 2000 - LAND USE MEETING

9:15 a.m. - Agenda Page 5, **Item 9.b. - Alternative water sources for Cone Ranch.**

Alternative water sources for Cone Ranch. (Water Resource Team)

Mr. Gary Kuhl, Water Resource Team Administrator, asked the Board to approve the Water Resource Team meeting with Tampa Bay Water (TBW) staff to review water source alternatives for Cone Ranch and return to the Board with a recommendation in 90 days. The Board would approve options to be considered by TBW before those options were presented to TBW. Mr. Kuhl reviewed 14 options listed in agenda materials.

Commissioner Platt understood that the city of Plant City (Plant City) might be considering utilizing the cooling water from Crystals International, Incorporated, as a possible water source. As a courtesy, Commissioner Platt suggested asking Plant City what was its plan for that. Commissioner Storms pointed out that people wanted Cone Ranch removed from the master water supply plan to protect it as a natural preserve, possibly for the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) or federal preserve.

Commissioner Wacksman felt the Water Resource Team should concentrate on alternatives that would provide 3 to 8 million gallons per day (mgd) of water. Other alternatives on the list provided smaller recovery sources, which could be grouped together. Even so, replacing 12 mgd would be difficult without having one alternative that provided from 3 to 8 mgd.

Commissioner Norman said the alternative sources had been considered in depth scientifically and with the political overtones from all the different communities. He wanted to develop an achievable list without jeopardizing Cone Ranch. The Board needed to understand the TBW voting block and what Hillsborough County would confront when it asked for support to remove Cone Ranch from the master water plan. The Board should know which alternatives would receive most support from other counties.

Vice Chairman Hart recalled that TBW or its predecessor had applied to Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to withdraw a certain amount of water from Cone Ranch, which would reduce the amount from 12 mgd to 6 or 8 mgd. SWFWMD had denied the application, because it would be environmentally harmful. He wanted that information known, if it was true, because that would provide a realistic number as a planning factor instead of the 12 mgd. Mr. Kuhl replied that SWFWMD, in informal conversations, had indicated 6 mgd or less

would probably be a more accurate number to consider.

Dr. Scott Emery, County Water Resources Advisor, clarified the Cone Ranch project, as stated in the master water plan, was the Cone Ranch plus dispersed wells. The combination of a wellfield at Cone Ranch plus an unspecified number and location of dispersed wells was jointly proposed to provide 12 mgd. An application had not been submitted to SWFWMD for a wellfield at Cone Ranch. Preapplication meetings had been held between TBW and SWFWMD on the Cone Ranch dispersed well system. Also, at least one pump test had been conducted on a site west of Cone Ranch where some dispersed wells might be placed. The Board needed to be cognizant that Cone Ranch proper was substantially less than 12 mgd; however, the whole project in the master water plan was for 12 mgd.

Regarding the alternative for an additional desalination plant at Anclote, Commissioner Storms explained TBW had already prioritized a second desalination plant, which might or might not be placed at Anclote. Although Commissioner Storms supported desalination, it did not do anything to remove Cone Ranch from the master water plan. Mr. Kuhl answered Commissioner Storms' questions about brackish groundwater desalination.

Commissioner Platt noted that all of the suggestions were good; however, the Water Resource Team wanted authorization to investigate the alternatives for viable sources. Commissioner Norman wanted a reality checklist using scientific information, subtracting political implications.

Commissioner Wacksman moved the recommendations of staff--to direct the Hillsborough County Water Resource Team to review and develop the alternative projects to the Cone Ranch wellfield with TBW; to provide an update on the progress of the review to the Board in 90 days; and to continue to pursue the goals of removing the Cone Ranch wellfield from the list of future potable water supply projects. Commissioner Norman seconded the motion.

Commissioner Platt wanted to omit Anclote as an alternative, because she could not vote on that. Assistant County Attorney Edward Helvenston recommended the Board make two motions, omitting Anclote from one motion. **Commissioner Wacksman withdrew Anclote from the motion, Commissioner Norman agreed.**

Commissioner Storms noted that Commissioner Platt had abstained from voting on the underlying motion that directed staff to develop the proposed list. Following discussion, Commissioner Platt clarified that she had been advised by the County Attorney's Office on all abstentions; however, she did not want any appearance of conflict, because her husband owned property near Anclote, and she would abstain from voting on the motion. The motion in June was based on a comment from Commissioner Hart informing the Board that in April TBW had taken a position that the alternative to Cone Ranch was the desalination plant. Since Commissioner Platt would abstain from voting on the motion,

Commissioner Wacksman included Anclote; Commissioner Norman agreed. The motion carried three to zero; Commissioner Platt abstained. (Commissioners Scott and Storms were out of the room; Chairman Frank was absent.)

Chief Assistant County Attorney Jim Porter explained a motion to reconsider was necessary for Commissioner Storms to vote on the motion since she was not in the room when the vote was taken. **Commissioner Norman moved to reconsider, seconded by Commissioner Wacksman, and carried five to zero; Commissioner Platt abstained.** (Chairman Frank was absent.) **Commissioner Wacksman moved staff recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Norman, and carried five to zero; Commissioner Platt abstained.** (Chairman Frank was absent.)