



## OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY

Miriam R. Hill – Commissioner, District 1  
Danny Fullwood – Chairman, District 2  
Scott Hanna – Secretary/Treasurer, District 3  
Carrol Franklin – Commissioner, District 4  
Mike Cole – Vice Chairman, District 5

### Master Plan Workshop Minutes

October 18, 2022

The Ocean Highway and Port Authority of Nassau County held its Master Plan Workshop on Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at the John Drew Tax Collector, 86130 License Road, Ste. #9, Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Chairman Fullwood.

There was no invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, or roll call performed. In attendance were Chairman Fullwood; Vice Chairman Cole; David Kaufman, Executive Director; Ray Nelson, Commissioner-elect; Justin Taylor, Commissioner-elect; Justin Cole, RS&H Project Manager; Hunter Livingston, FDOT Coordinator; and Rossana Hebron, Administrative Office Manager. Commissioner Hill joined via Zoom call.

Mr. Kaufman prefaced the meeting by stating the goal is to adopt the plan at the end of this year, if not, in January 2023. He explained there were some overarching themes throughout the document. The plan needs to address community issues (transportation improvements, scalability of the terminal, and waterfront redevelopment). In addition, there were considerations for growth opportunities both on and off site, recognize powers and authorities County-wide, capital investments, protection of capital assets, environmental resiliency, and revenue generation for OHPA. Finally, address the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) accommodation issue and OHPA's needs for office space.

He acknowledged Dr. John Martin's contribution to the Master Plan project, specifically, the market analysis and economic impact in correspondence with Mr. Cole. Additionally, stakeholders provide inputs in the planning process. There are plans to schedule the second workshops for both stakeholders and public, respectively. The final meeting will be the adoption of the Master Plan.

Mr. Kaufman directed the focus specifically towards the mission/vision/goals-objectives portion of the presentation. He hoped to obtain some feedback from those who were present.

The following highlights were taken from the presentation agenda with Mr. Cole's permission:

## **1. Community feedback (from the first public open house)**

- Concern regarding expansion beyond current Port footprint or development of nearby lots
- Concern regarding intrusion into Historic District
- Off-site staging/queuing area for trucks
- Number of trucks queuing on Dade Street
- Concern regarding alternate entrance along Escambia Street, impacts salt marsh and displacement of roosting habitat for endangered birds
- Diminished quality of life by Port activities
- Vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, sea level rise
- General concerns of noise, idling trucks, speeding trucks, trash, etc.
- Support for small cruise ships and local tourism industry
- How to best leverage the unique role of a small port in a small historic community that values its quality of life.

The major concern (42%) points to the truck operations around the Port with environmental concerns trailing at 25%. Mr. Cole acknowledged the public's concerns and will address in the plan accordingly.

## **2. Master Plan overview**

### **- Port entry and exit improvements**

1. Maintain inbound/outbound on Dade Street
2. Escambia St. inbound, Dade St. outbound
3. Escambia St. inbound and outbound
4. Westrock inbound, Dade St. outbound (community suggestion)

TPO offered to fund and conduct a study of ingress/egress at the facility. Best options for both the Port and community are under considerations.

### **- Waterfront redevelopment**

1. Support working waterfront redevelopment
  - coordinate with Beacon Seafood Company
2. Explore multi-use structure
  - accommodate port-of-call passengers, OHPA Administrative offices, and CBP offices.
3. Connect the Port to downtown
  - new structure built to match Fernandina Beach downtown Welcome Center.

Primary concern is to address, in the next 2-3 years, to provide facilities for the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency to continue to operate out of Port of Fernandina. The CBP does not pay for their facilities, rent or utilities. OHPA hopes to build its own office space downtown. An approximate 4,000 sq. ft. two-story building, on OHPA property, is being considered. The increase in cruise line revenue will help pay for the operating cost of the structure. The capital side can be funded through a Seaport grant with a 50:50 match. The Port expects to welcome a dozen cruise ships per year that



are nominally 200-300 passengers. This plan will not impact the vacant OHPA parcel currently used for employee parking.

Mr. Nelson commented he foresees some cranes will be displaced (Liebherr and Clyde) and possibly some TWIC issues. Mr. Kaufman explained there will be a short distance between the cruise ship and the planned structure for passengers to embark and disembark. There will be a guard at the entrance of the structure to guide the passengers. It will minimize the impact on Port operations during port-of-calls.

**- Resiliency and environmental action**

- Evaluate options for reducing vulnerability of the north section of the Terminal to include the rail tracks and future flooding.
- Opportunities to improve connection from Amelia River to tributary northeast of Terminal.

OHPA is in the running for a federal through state grant to develop a resiliency plan for growth. It will allow to hire an engineering firm to review resiliency and develop a plan for more future projects fundings. Also, consider coordinating efforts with the City.

Mr. Nelson explained the north section is continually sinking and is a challenge to resolve. Mr. Cole suggested there are stronger materials to reinforce that section.

**- Grounds and infrastructure changes**

- Expand transit shed between Calhoun and Broome Streets
- designate Port District roads
- Explore leaving Customs House in current location while converting to alternative use (accommodate office space, affordable housing, museum, etc.)
- Market the vacant residential parcels on Dade St. at Terminal entrance
- Close Escambia St. right-of-way west of N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St.

**- Industrial development opportunities**

- Crawford Diamond Industrial Park
- Wildlight Commerce Park
- Villages of Kingsland-Commerce Park (Camden County, GA)
- Portside Paper/Worldwide Terminals site (US 17 south of 200)

The abovementioned lend options for additional revenue opportunities. St. Mary's Economic Development group asked for OHPA's assistance to market/promote the Villages of Kingsland. Interested parties to said area require connection to a port. The Portside Paper is a 1,000 sq. ft. warehouse facility.

**- Small cruise line marketing opportunities**

- create new strategies to increase cruise popularity to Fernandina/ Nassau County
- develop itineraries for cruise passengers
- highlight points of interests (Tuscan Rose Vineyards, Amelia Island beaches, White Oak conservation, Kayak Amelia, etc.)



**- Operational changes**

- coordinate with Terminal Operator to develop rolling, 5-year capital improvement program
- shift focus more to bulk storage (domes for fertilizer, silos for aggregates)
- explore opportunities with bulk material trucking operations via Friendly Road to reduce trucks near Terminal

**- Potential harbor improvements**

- add mooring/breasting dolphins to south end of berth to increase operational flexibility
- enter harbor survey matrix for NE Florida (6-month rotation, maintains limiting draft for berth, important for Harbor Pilots to know)

**3. Mission/Vision/Goals-Objectives**

The second half of the workshop (goals/objectives) addressed/discussed the aforementioned topics above.

The mission and vision statements were discussed. Commissioner Hill conveyed her concerns as to how OHPA can connect its goals and objectives to its mission and vision in assisting in job creation and economy locally, to hold itself accountable to connect each goal/objective to local value. She hoped to ensure OHPA has some control of the local activities/excursions and be a part of the planning/decision process. Mr. Kaufman explained part of the process is to collaborate with the Nassau County Chamber of Commerce in developing, for example, the cruise business marketing group to plan itineraries and coordinate with the other local businesses/venues. In addition, OHPA will have control on how it will manage traffic flow from the Terminal to particular venues. Commissioner Hill suggested planning ahead and develop a transportation plan. She also conveyed the community's view on larger ships, not palatable. Chairman Fullwood concurred that such large-sized ships will not be welcomed at the Port.

Consequently, as for the City's concern regarding the expansion outside the Port's footprint, the planned administrative structure is well within OHPA's property and will not be used for industrial purposes. The design will be commensurate to the City's blueprint.

Commissioner Hill offered suggestions to the mission statement that reflect the needs of the County and position the powers of OHPA's charter to meet those needs, not limit the mission to just maritime components. Other transportation related to industrial activity in Nassau County will be added to the mission statement. The same idea goes for the vision statement that will reflect developing and operating other transportation to benefit the citizens of the County and State.

The group discussed each line item of the goals and objectives. Suggestions were offered to add/subtract and revise the current document.

Mr. Cole requested additional feedback or suggestions from the Board and ultimately, from the stakeholders, on the mission/vision/goals and objectives by the end of the month. Commissioner Hill inquired if the meeting documents will be posted on OHPA's

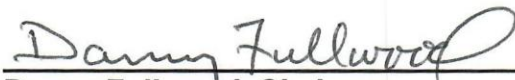
website to inform and receive feedback from the public. The recommendation is for Mr. Cole to receive said feedback and suggestions, apply to the respective topics, and distribute the updated version to the full Board and stakeholders; subsequently, to the public. Another stakeholders' committee meeting #2 is tentatively scheduled November 9<sup>th</sup>. The next public workshop is planned for the first week of December. Per Mr. Cole, there is plenty of time for revisions before the Master Plan is finalized. The extra time, if needed, is included in the amount per the agreement with RS&H and will not be calculated as additional charge.

A safety concern was brought up by a public member in attendance at the workshop regarding tree limbs growing over the Port fences. Mr. Nelson will examine the matter.

Chairman Fullwood thanked Mr. Cole for his presentation and the two public members who attended the workshop.

### **Adjourn**

**With no other questions brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52 PM.**



**Danny Fullwood, Chairman**

11-16-2022

**Date**