

**Official Minutes of  
MARION COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

February 6, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 3:03 p.m. on Thursday, February 6, 2025 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

**INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN KATHY BRYANT**

Chairman Bryant advised that the workshop was scheduled this afternoon to discuss updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Vice-Chairman Carl Zalak, III, District 4; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Michelle Stone, District 5. Also present were County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Tracy Straub, Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, Deputy Growth Services Director Ken Weyrauch, and Senior Planner Chris Rison.

The Deputy Clerk was in receipt of a 33 page Agenda packet to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation.

**WORKSHOP PRESENTATION**

1. Provide an Update and Receive Board Input Regarding the Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report – December 9, 2024.

Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Florida Statute Section 163.3191 requires an evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan every seven years to ensure consistency with statutory requirements and community engagement. This Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR) identified changes to the Comprehensive Plan that need to be completed over the next year (by February 2026).

The workshop today is the first of ten workshops scheduled over the next five (5) months. During this series of workshops, the Board will focus on gaining consensus for proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and discuss broader topics that will help set the vision for guiding future growth and development in Marion County. At today's workshop the Board will discuss the overall timeline, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Density Clustering in rural areas. The Board will also review proposed edits to the following elements of the Comprehensive Plan: the potable water, aquifer recharge, economic, and property rights elements.

Recommended Action: Staff is seeking Board discussion and consensus on the proposed edits.

February 6, 2025

Blair Knighting, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (KHA), stated she is present to start a new project with the Board, noting it is called the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) Based Amendments. She provided an overview of the process for these workshops going forward.

Ms. Knighting commented on the Agenda for today, which will include: 1) a timeline for 2025; 2) floor area ratio (FAR); 3) cluster density bonus; and 4) what to expect for the next workshop.

Ms. Knighting referred to a slide as seen on the overhead screens, which depicts the timeline for 2025. She stated the EAR letter was submitted the Friday, January 31, 2025, workshops are scheduled until June, staff will analyze workshop results then review changes during public workshops, there will be additional redlining, there will be one more workshop to discuss any possible changes resulting from the public workshops and then staff will begin transmitting. Ms. Knighting advised that the letter from the State was received, and the transmittal deadline is January 28, 2026, noting the County will have to be ready with all of the redline changes in less than a year.

Ms. Knighting advised that when discussing the Future Land Use Element (FLUE) last year, a topic that came up was Floor Area Ratio (FAR). She stated FAR is the gross floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the total lot area, noting 0.5 FAR represents a scenario where one half of the parcel is covered by one story of a building. Ms. Knighting advised that using the previous scenario, but going up to two stories would equal a FAR of 1.0, and the same parcel with 4 stories on half of it results in a FAR of 2.0. She stated in Florida it is more likely the parcel will be used for the building and the parking area, landscaping and ponds; however, there are scenarios where the building takes up the whole parcel in more dense area such as downtown.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Knighting clarified that the FAR includes only the building(s) and does not include the parking area (unless it is a parking garage) or ponds. She referred to a slide, which represents what the County currently has in the Comprehensive Plan for land uses. Ms. Knighting advised that there is currently FAR for Rural Activity Centers (RACs) due to the Commercial. She commented on the differences between FAR and density, noting density relates to units (housing) and FAR relates to non-residential uses. Ms. Knighting stated there is a variety of FAR in the County's current Comprehensive Plan ranging from 0.35 in the RACs to 2.0 in the Employment Center (EC). She provided an overview of the pluses and minuses of both low FAR and high FAR. Ms. Knighting advised that low FAR typically has a larger building and a larger lot, favors horizontal development, limits use, is less dense, has a lower infrastructure demand, is common in suburban and rural majority residential areas, and has a low profile. She commented on high FAR, which typically takes up less parcel footprint, favors vertical development, has greater opportunity for development, is in a denser environment, drives a greater infrastructure demand, common in Commercial, mixed-use, and industrial areas, and has a more efficient land use pattern. Ms. Knighting provided an example relating to the Holiday Inn at Interstate 75 (I-75) and College Road, noting hotels typically have more floors, despite often being located on smaller parcels. The FAR for the Holiday Inn is 0.70. She commented on an example of a building in a downtown area with a really high FAR, which takes up the entire parcel and includes a parking structure.

Ms. Knighting stated the Comprehensive Plan is dated out to 2050, noting the KHA recommendation is to keep the FAR the way it is due to a lack of issues relating to individuals needing Land Use Amendments for more FAR. She advised that keeping the

FAR at 2.0 in the most intense land use category makes sense, noting that is where the County wants growth.

Commissioner Zalak commented on applicants who use FAR against the Board relating to various land use cases. He stated individuals moving from Commercial with a FAR of the Holiday Inn (0.70), and they may just build a doctor's office or something with almost no traffic count, but they want the entitlements of the trips from a 1.0 FAR of Commercial and maybe move to Residential or an apartment complex, etc. Commissioner Zalak advised that the Commercial FAR of 1.0 gives significantly more allowance for traffic than the other options. He opined that B-1 (Neighborhood Business), B-2 (Community Business), B-3 (Specialty Business), B-4 (Regional Business) and B-5 (Heavy Business) should be limited to a quarter of the FAR given today, and the higher densities should possibly be 1.0 or 2.0. Commissioner Zalak commented on the Dollar Tree expansion in Marion Oaks, noting he does not believe it has a 1.0 FAR despite how tall it is.

Senior Planner Rison, Growth Services, confirmed that the FAR is not 1.0.

Commissioner Zalak stated even the biggest thing built as far as a logistics center does not hit a FAR of 1.0; however, a lot of trips are being given away on area roads through the amendments. He advised that most often the engineers state they cannot build to a FAR of 1.0 anyway, due to retention areas and the parking lot. Commissioner Zalak stated a FAR of 1.0 could go in the hotel category, noting it can be shown that even a 6 story hotel does not reach a FAR of 1.0. He opined that it is bad policy and questioned why Ms. Knighting does not think the same.

Ms. Knighting advised that other than the argument relating to trips, KHA and the County are planning for 2050, noting there is an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) where the County wants the growth to happen, which could mean by 2050 the County will see smaller lots and higher buildings. She stated if the FAR is changed and reduced, it could result in an issue for an existing entitlement for existing parcels that already have that land use category.

Chairman Bryant commented on all the talk relating to entitlements and takings, noting unless an individual has a contract to build out to every entitlement that property has today, or within a reasonable amount of time, she does not see why the Board cannot change this due to it being in the best interest of the community. She stated the Board should allow 6 months to a year for those with projects they are currently working on and want to bring before the Board. Chairman Bryant questioned why the Board does not have the authority to change anything.

Mr. Minter advised that historically, nobody has the expectation that land use regulations will not change over time. He stated when an individual gets into the issue of vested rights, it requires that the property owner actually incurs substantial expenses in their reliance on the regulations they have at that date. Mr. Minter advised that if the individual has not applied for a project then the County can make changes to the land use regulations and even the zoning.

Commissioner Zalak advised that a "120 Letter" can be used to grandfather certain projects where individuals have expended funds.

Mr. Minter commented on a Bert J. Harris Act case (Ocean Concrete, Inc. v. Indian River County, Board of County Commissioners) where the County Government was ruled against due to the investment the applicant had made prior to the downzoning occurring.

Ms. Knighting stated she will support the changes if Mr. Minter is comfortable.

February 6, 2025

Commissioner Zalak opined that the decision should be made based on what the data shows most individuals are building to today, rather than having a random FAR of 1.0 and be giving away trips on County roads unnecessarily, especially in a conversion.

Chairman Bryant stated the Board has the authority to run an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, should the County start to receive applications exceeding the FAR. Commissioner Zalak stated an individual almost has to go to downtown Jacksonville to get to 2.0 FAR, noting it is very different than what the County is doing today.

Ms. Knighting stated Hendricks on San Marco relates to a more dense, walkable area that also addresses the Planned Service Areas (PSAs) where there can be a more walkable community. She advised that locations with a FAR of 2.0 are where individuals see the more walkable communities, there are not large open spaces, it is building after building while being engaging and pedestrian friendly. Ms. Knighting stated it is typically mixed-use with retail and two to three floors of residential above.

Chairman Bryant opined that it could be allowed in a PSA.

Commissioner Zalak advised that most of those things are not working even in some of those urban areas like Gainesville. He stated they build those structures because they are required by form-based code (FBC). Commissioner Zalak advised that relating to FBC, the retail at the bottom is zeroed out in the equation and it is all based on student housing.

Mr. Bouyounes stated the Board has discussed the PSA that was just mentioned, as well as step-down zoning moving into the UGB. He advised that currently the FAR is throughout the UGB, noting the solution may be to be more selective and determine where the Board wants the FAR to be, including the PSAs once they are established.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Bouyounes stated the FAR is the same throughout the Urban area outside of the UGB and is determined by land use.

Chairman Bryant advised that staff should be able to view vacant parcels and forecast what will develop on those parcels, what the land use is, and come up with a FAR that makes sense.

Commissioner McClain requested clarification relating to FAR and road trips.

Amber Gartner, KHA, advised that when the County is considering a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, information is provided as part of that testimony. She stated often times KHA will present that the Land Use Amendment would not result in a greater number of trips compared to the existing FLU. Ms. Gartner clarified that it does not grant concurrency, it is just evidence to support the FLU Amendment. Commissioner Zalak stated engineering teams do a great job for the clients and sell this as a reduction in trips by changing the land use.

Ms. Gartner advised that this is accurate when looking at it from a Comprehensive Plan perspective. She stated things do not typically develop as intensely, noting even in the Residential FLUs there is a maximum and often those do not develop to the maximum of that potential.

Ms. Knighting advised that KHA can further investigate this topic if it is the pleasure of the Board.

Commissioner Zalak stated some of the Business classifications do not need to be at a FAR of 1.0; however, hotels and industrial uses could probably be allowed to be up to 1.0 by land use to provide plenty of capacity. He advised that the Board could get actual results from what is built in the community and judge from there what the County will likely need in 2050.

Commissioner Stone stated she is in favor of step-down densities in areas that will be

designated as PSAs. She commented on the need to protect the rural lands across the entire County, noting she is willing to go to a FAR of 2.0 in the urbanized areas for the Commerce District Area in the long-term.

Chairman Bryant advised that based on the examples presented to the Board, the only way to get to a FAR of 2.0 is if there is a small parcel that went up multiple stories, which she is not currently seeing individuals build. She stated if someone does want to do that, they have the option to come before the Board and request a change at that time.

Commissioner Stone commented on compact development that has not been identified as much.

Chairman Bryant opined that the market would dictate when that type of development will occur, noting when the market starts moving in that direction, the Board will have to take this up and make a change.

Commissioner Zalak advised that the County does not have the infrastructure to support a FAR of 2.0 outside of a one block radius. He stated the roads are not sufficient, noting the City of Ocala is not built to a FAR of 1.0 and it cannot handle the traffic it has today. Commissioner Zalak opined that the City of Ocala could not be built to a 2.0.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Zalak stated a FAR of 2.0 makes sense for an EC or a hospital.

Chairman Bryant stated there is only one facility that meets the criteria.

Commissioner Zalak advised that the County needs to hone it in better and not give away all those trips for every other piece. He commented on changing the FAR and the development units per acre, both residential and commercially as development hits the buffer of the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA) or other designated areas.

Chairman Bryant stated as Commissions, staff, and the County have become more sophisticated, the current Board has seen sins of the past and has attempted to correct those matters.

In response to Mr. Bouyounes, Ms. Knighting advised that this topic is found in the FLUE as are many of the top topics for discussion. She stated there will not be a final redline of the FLUE until the final workshop, noting it will be a working document.

Mr. Bouyounes opined that once the Board sees the PSA locations and the step-down zoning, and discusses that, it may be easier to go back and make a decision relating to FAR.

Ms. Knighting advised of an economic specialist in Charlotte who is great at performing market studies and analyzing existing areas to determine what to expect. She stated she will engage her and bring back some talking points.

Mr. Bouyounes requested information relating to the software the County will be acquiring to assist in planning out areas.

Deputy Director Ken Weyrauch, Growth Services, advised that ArcGIS Urban is the system and the County hopes to start that process very soon. He stated it will take roughly four to five months to roll out before staff can use it with all their projects.

Commissioner Zalak stated when he spoke to Senior Planner Chris Rison, he thought most of the Commercial development FAR that was occurring was closer to 0.25.

Mr. Rison advised that 0.25 is approximately accurate.

Commissioner Curry questioned if there has been any discussion relating to height restrictions. Commissioner Zalak stated it could be set at 0.4, allowing a project to go two or three stories without having to come back before the Board. He opined that most things that are going to be of the magnitude of what is being discussed here and truly have the kind of development style with a true mixed-use will have to come back before the Board.

February 6, 2025

for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or something else anyway. Commissioner Zalak stated he does not want to grant it by right. He opined that when it goes above what is normal there can be discussion and when the Board starts to see it a lot, it is time to change.

Mr. Rison advised that part of that is the market driven aspects of things, noting the difficulty is trying to keep the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC) current with actual market trends because they just appear out of nowhere. He stated the County may be able to structure some things where it is noted that it is less intense now than it will be in the future. Mr. Rison advised that the mechanisms should be in place. He stated the key is even though it is the maximum density or intensity FAR, the concept is the applicant still has to meet all the other regulations in place to build in the first place. Commissioner Zalak advised that the County is getting better at how these matters are being handled, noting that means there is a need to improve relating to how traffic counts and road infrastructure are done and where to put that funding.

Mr. Rison stated as the market goes up, individuals start wanting more stories. He commented on AdventHealth Ocala Hospital, noting they have an approximate 500,000 square foot (sf) site or just over 11 acres, but the main hospital building and its main addition are over 500,000 sf now plus all of their auxiliary offices. Mr. Rison advised that they are pushing those thresholds and marks. He stated with the lesser restrictions on hospitals; they are getting more into campuses where they can centralize everything.

Chairman Bryant opined that if a large corporation wanted to make improvements that would eventually exceed the FAR, they will be talking to their elected officials about what they need to do to accomplish their goal.

Mr. Rison stated the Dollar Tree expansion project located in Marion Oaks is a very large building, but it is all single stories. He advised that the main building (the really tall building), they are using an automated high racking system, which required them to build the racks first and construct the building around the racks. Mr. Rison stated Growth Services staff has thought in the areas with those designations, one day instead of having a distribution building there might be a multi-story research facility further diversifying the economy, base and more.

Ms. Knighting addressed the cluster density bonus, noting it is only available to Rural lands outside both the UGB and the FPA. She advised that it requires a PUD and the applicant must have a minimum of 60% open space. Ms. Knighting stated the cluster density bonus is meant to be an incentive to encourage clustering and preserving open space.

Chairman Bryant passed the gavel to Commissioner Zalak who assumed the chair.

Commissioner Bryant out at 3:16 p.m.

Ms. Knighting advised that if an individual does the cluster density bonus, instead of having one dwelling unit (du) per ten acres, it would be one du per seven acres. She stated based on 100 acres an individual could have ten units without the cluster density bonus or fourteen units with the bonus. Ms. Knighting reiterated that the program is meant to be an incentive in the Rural lands; however, no one is utilizing the bonus. She advised that when looking at the requirements in the LDC relating to the cluster density bonus, it is even more restrictive.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 3:18 p.m.

Chairman Zalak returned the gavel to Commissioner Bryant who resumed the chair.

Ms. Knighting commented on the Comprehensive Plan requirement for a PUD, noting it can be a risk for some individuals and then the applicant has to provide more than half of

the area as open space to get a very minor amount of density in exchange. She stated the LDC requires a point system and it is a difficult process. Ms. Knighting opined that on its face this was an innovative tool, noting pieces of this can be used in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan. She advised that the benefit is not great enough to warrant the work and the level of risk an applicant would go through to use this piece. Ms. Knighting stated the bonus works well as a stepdown buffer between UGB and rural areas; however, given the underutilization, the density incentive may not be high enough for an owner to set aside 60% open space. She advised that there are ways to strengthen the cluster density bonus, make it easier, or based on the lack of use it can be stricken from the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Knighting stated the Board could incentivize it more by going from one du per seven acres to one per five.

Commissioner Curry questioned if the objective is to not incentivize the development of that additional agricultural land. Based on discussion she has heard over the past year, Ms. Knighting advised that is her understanding.

Commissioner Curry opined that it should be removed.

Ms. Knighting stated the next workshop relates to step-down approaches, noting perhaps a form of this can be used inside the UGB.

Commissioner Stone opined that this could possibly be put into play relating to step-down uses.

Commissioner Zalak commented on situations where an individual wants to have open space for polo or other sports fields, noting in those instances it made sense. He questioned adding a different kind of hamlet (equine/mini farm) where if there were more than 100 acres, the applicant could have farms ranging from 3.5 acres to 10 acres, with a trail system for common space possibly connecting to a larger horse trail system.

Mr. Rison stated the County's most recent hamlet is not what was described due to being a lakefront hamlet with no emphasis on equestrian uses. He advised that there are a number of hamlets, and around the perimeters of many of them there are trails designated by their association. Mr. Rison stated Bel Lago was one of the first "super" hamlets, noting it is 4 separate hamlets and around the perimeters they have horse trails that residents can utilize. He advised that they have structured the property, and the interior circles are 1 acre lots that are fully buildable. The owner chooses whether or not to have a separate open space tract that is held, or otherwise the other owners can hold those open space tracts. Mr. Rison stated other hamlets do these things, noting one of the first is located on Highway 475 just south of the Greenway. He advised that they are scattered around. Mr. Rison stated the provision already exists for the one du per five acres and also an option for one du per three and a half acres and that option is the one that has not really been used. He commented on issues within the horse industry relating to having common facilities and common barns due to disease. Mr. Rison advised that the key with the hamlet provisions and the other cluster provision was the concept of having your open space ultimately be around your perimeter to help cluster the area of development more in the center, providing bigger open spaces to the surrounding lands that are also Rural and are typically going to be much larger acreage tracts as well. He stated there has been a total of approximately 40 hamlets to date and they have been somewhat cyclical.

Commissioner Zalak advised that he was looking for a way to make that smaller mini farm a little more practical. He commented on family divisions being used to create mini farms, noting individuals are doing it one way or the other and it should be made legitimate in one of these ways.

Mr. Rison stated there are some with larger lot sizes, noting it depends on what market

February 6, 2025

the developer is ultimately pursuing. He advised that it has been noted for individuals that they can come in and apply for a development; however, at this time they are not permissible within the FPA. Mr. Rison stated the intent was to avoid breaking up larger tracts into much smaller tracts for hobby/one person operation farm.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Knighting advised that she suggests striking the cluster density bonus, but coming back at the next workshop to modify other ways inside the UGB for step downs.

Ms. Knighting stated the next workshop will be Monday, February 24, 2025, and the discussion will focus on step down approaches, RACs, and the protection of Rural lands and neighborhoods. She advised that she hopes to have the Capital Improvements and Intergovernmental Elements ready for the Board. Ms. Knighting commented on the Capital Improvements Element, noting if any of the Levels of Service (LOS) change she will have to bring that back.

Ms. Knighting addressed the Potable Water Element redlines, noting KHA went through one-on-ones with the Board relating to this material. She stated there has been a change since the last time the redlined items were viewed in the matrix form. Ms. Knighting advised that there was some conversation relating to pushing the LOS to the LDC; however, she has been working with other municipalities where the State is pushing to keep the LOS in the Comprehensive Plan. She stated her suggestion is to not strike LOS from this element. Ms. Knighting referred to Policy 1.1.1 relating to the LOS standard of one hundred and fifty gallons per person per day, noting this was not removed. She commented on the previous work performed relating to this very technical element. Ms. Knighting provided an overview of the redlined changes.

Commissioner Zalak requested clarification relating to Policy 1.3.2 stating, "The County shall investigate the feasibility of establishing franchise regulations and rules to require that privately owned systems certificated by the FPSC be constructed to the standards and regulations contained in the LDC for County-owned systems."

Ms. Knighting noted that former Utilities Director Jody Kirkman requested this be added. She advised that the County was being asked to take on these private utilities and Mr. Kirkman wanted stricter regulation requiring them to meet County standards.

Chairman Bryant stated it was her understanding this was already occurring.

Mr. Bouyounes clarified that it occurred through negotiation with developments.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if this is the best language. Mr. Bouyounes advised that he is not sure the language is clear.

Ms. Knighting stated KHA will work to simplify that language.

Ms. Knighting commented on aquifer recharge, noting this item was very much a matter of clean-up. She advised that a lot of it was still pushing the regulations to the Health Department (DOH), noting the State has taken over the septic requirements.

Mr. Bouyounes clarified that septic has always been with the State; however, now the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has taken over.

Ms. Knighting concurred, noting there were references to the Marion County DOH and now it is FDEP.

In response to Mr. Bouyounes, Ms. Knighting stated the next Element for review is Economic Element. She advised that there was a long discussion relating to Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership (CEP) approximately a month ago. Ms. Knighting stated her recommendation is to strike Policy 1.5.6 due to the unclear language. She addressed Policy 1.6.2, noting KHA wanted to ensure it was stated, "The County may also partner with and/or designate one or more entities to facilitate achieving target



industries, such as, but not limited to the CEP.” Ms. Knighting advised that she added Objective 1.7, noting all the Policies below this item were talking about the public/private partnership and required an Objective.

Chairman Zalak commented on Objective 1.6 relating to aquifer recharge, noting it should include language stating the County is protecting the water for Marion County residents and not someone else.

Chairman Bryant opined that Goal 1 should contain the language Commissioner Zalak suggested.

Commissioner Zalak stated eventually Florida will have more and more water rights issues and the County should be planning for its citizens.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Commissioner Zalak advised that Marion County has plenty of water; however, other locations are fighting over water.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the benefits Marion County has due to the Ocala National Forest, noting both spring sheds on the Rainbow and Silver rivers protect the County. He addressed language contained in Policy 1.6.5 and questioned if certain language/requirements relating to buffering (specific plantings such as viburnum) will contradict this element.

Ms. Knighting stated this Policy just supports the Element.

Chairman Bryant stated Commissioner Zalak is concerned with the language relating to drought tolerant landscaping.

Commissioner Zalak concurred.

General discussion ensued relating to drought tolerant landscaping language.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Rison advised that the LDC contains provisions, and staff is allowed to make exceptions, for example, when considering Conditional uses.

Commissioner Zalak opined that this language sets the County up for failure relating to buffering, noting there are other Districts that use very similar irrigation to heavily restrict an individual’s ability to use plantings and variations.

Mr. Rison stated the LDC reflects those kinds of activities and contains different options. He advised that there is technically the ability for an individual to seek a waiver.

Chairman Bryant questioned if there were any further questions relating to aquifer recharge. It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions relating to this matter.

Commissioner Stone commented on Objective 1.4 relating to the Economic Element, noting further in, it describes the many things the County does and what it should be looking at for qualified developments through Objective 1.5. She questioned if this is all being done.

Ms. Knighting stated she had the CEP review this entire Element and they are doing all these things.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Mr. Rison advised that there are other programs that have not been used in years, noting the Economic Development Financial Incentive Grant (EDFIG). He stated they actually prioritize different types of activities and uses. Mr. Rison advised that the County wants to provide grants for certain types of businesses, which typically works as a reimbursement type grant once the business has documented that they have achieved targets that were required. He stated the County’s own economic development activities have been scaled down a bit in favor of allowing the CEP to operate that function. Mr. Rison noted those are tools the County has available should there be something remarkable that comes to Marion County. He clarified that the Comprehensive Plan is saying if this is something the County desires because it is a

February 6, 2025

targeted industry, it can look to have its programs service that endeavor.

Commissioner Stone commented on language in Objective 1.4 that states, "CEP to maintain an inventory of commercial and industrial designated lands, make the inventory available to the public in multiple formats (e.g., electronic, etc.), and use its development review process to monitor development activity on a continuous basis." She questioned how and where the County gets that information for review. Mr. Rison advised that the information is available through the County's Geographic Information System (GIS), noting staff is looking at it becoming one of the tools they can develop with the GIS. He commented on available software that would allow an individual to search by specific zoning and land use, specify vacant, and receive a listing of all the sites that meet the criteria.

Chairman Bryant stated she remembers when the Board did all this and nothing was happening, the Chamber and Economic Development Council (EDC) were dissolving, so the Board made its own Office of Economic Development, which pushed the private sector to come together and do something. She advised that this policy was made then. Chairman Bryant questioned whether that should be the role of County Government, and if Commercial realtors are doing that already.

Commissioner Stone questioned if this should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Rison stated technically the Economic Element is not required under State provision. He advised that some communities have chosen to have them because they have much more robust plans for their different communities, noting Marion County brought this Element in due to some issues and concerns at the time. Mr. Rison stated if it happens again, the County will have these mechanisms. He advised that while a realtor would ideally know about properties in the County, sometimes they only know about land if it has been listed.

Chairman Bryant advised that with all the technology that the County has in place, staff know what the land use and zoning are on available vacant properties.

Mr. Bouyounes questioned if this Policy should be simplified to just target coordination with the CEP for economic development, which is what is happening. He opined that the Coordination Element is very important.

It was the general consensus of the Board to have Mr. Bouyounes review the policy and ensure it is all still needed.

Ms. Knighting stated the final element is the Property Rights Element and the only suggested change to that is changing the horizon to 2050 instead of 2035.

Commissioner Curry questioned if there is an estimate of how far the UGB will take the County. Mr. Rison advised that it is part of the information that is coming, noting it is the data inventory and analysis that is part of the material staff are reviewing and will be bringing to the Board.

Ms. Knighting stated the next workshop will address step down approaches, RACs, protection of Rural land and neighborhoods and there will be redline reviews of the Capital Improvements Element and Intergovernmental Element. The workshop will be Monday, February 24, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

**BOARD DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS: NONE**

February 6, 2025

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

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Kathy Bryant, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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