



## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

March 11, 2020 – 11:00 a.m.  
315 Court Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Board of County Commissioners Conference Room

### THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM February 12, 2020**
3. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND DISCUSSION**
4. **ADJOURNMENT**

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*Appeals: Certain public meetings result in actions taken by the public board, commission or agency that may be appealed; in such case persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at a public meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.*

**FORWARD PINELLAS  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY  
FEBRUARY 12, 2020**

Committee Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Dave Eggers, Pinellas County, Forward Pinellas Chair  
Councilmember David Allbritton, City of Clearwater  
Councilmember Brandi Gabbard, City of St. Petersburg

Not Present:

Mayor Cookie Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach, Forward Pinellas Treasurer

Also Present:

Whit Blanton, Executive Director  
Sarah Caper, Principal Planner  
Linda Fisher, Principal Planner  
Tina Jablon, Executive Administrative Secretary  
Chelsea Hardy, County Attorney's Office  
Brian Lowack, Intergovernmental Liaison, Pinellas County

The Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee met in the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Eggers called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 8, 2020

A motion was made by Councilmember David Allbritton, which was seconded by Councilmember Brandi Gabbard, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the January meeting (3-0).

3. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Whit Blanton updated the group on the developments regarding the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) bills (SB1000 and HB1371) which would require pedestrian crossings using yellow RRFBs to be replaced with signals displaying solid red lights when activated, or to be removed altogether within four years. There is now a committee substitute for HB1371, which allows the beacons at mid-block crossings on two lane roads with speeds of 35 mph or less. It would require installing a fully functioning light signal or removing the crosswalks and beacons otherwise. There was much discussion about the bill among the group. A letter from Forward Pinellas opposing this legislation was written by Mr. Blanton and submitted to the legislature for consideration. However, the committee decided another letter should be written with more specific suggestions for alternatives. A motion was made by Councilmember Gabbard, seconded by Councilmember Allbritton, and carried unanimously to recommend to the full board that another official letter be written opposing this bill.

Whit Blanton highlighted the materials submitted by the City of Largo, which included a letter opposing the RRFB legislation, the city's 2020 state legislative agenda and 2020 federal legislative agenda.

Mr. Blanton introduced a request from St. Petersburg to support a piece of late legislation that seeks to amend the language concerning how the local option sales tax may be used for affordable housing. Councilmember Gabbard elaborated on information she had heard regarding the proposed amendment. She advised that after further investigation, she thought it best to wait until next session to address this issue when further collaboration can occur throughout the county and more research can be done. Chelsea Hardy advised the group that the only allowable affordable housing expenditure under the current language is land acquisition. The proposed bill language would have additionally allowed demolition, site preparation, and other activities. Brian Lowack pointed out that it is not just a Pinellas County issue, but rather a statewide issue. He stated that 30 counties levy this tax. He feels in order to be successful acquiring a change to the language it would be best approached as a group of counties, not just Pinellas County. He suggested working with the Florida Association of Counties and other similar groups to gain some consensus.

Linda Fisher provided an overview of HB459 and SB954, which seek to prohibit local governments from imposing design requirements on one- or two-story residential buildings, including the appearance of exterior cladding, roofs, porches, architectural ornamentation, windows, entry doors, garage doors, and interior room layout. Home Owner Associations would be protected. The only exceptions to the preemption are for specified types of historic properties, or where design elements are needed to meet National Flood Insurance Program requirements. The preemption does not apply to regulation of building height, bulk, orientation, location and buffering. This would undermine local governments' authority to regulate the character of their neighborhoods and our ability to implement the Countywide Plan. Brian Lowack advised the group that if the bill has not begun making its way through committees, it would likely not make it to a vote this session.

The group then began discussions about HB519 and SB1766 related to the Bert Harris Act. Linda Fisher detailed the language of the bills, explaining that they would require that when a local government settles a property rights claims under the Bert Harris Act, owners of all "similarly situated residential properties" shall be presumed entitled to equivalent settlements. The House bill also allows a property owner to file a challenge under the Land Use and Environmental Dispute Resolution Act if a request for a comprehensive plan amendment is denied. Chelsea Hardy explained that it is difficult to determine what specifically the term "similarly situated" means and how it will be interpreted, which could create a large amount of unpredictable financial liability for local governments. The bill is also problematic because it characterizes a local government's denial of a comprehensive plan amendment, which is a legislative action, as a "dispute." It was decided that Commissioner Eggert would reach out to the bill's sponsor and that Chelsea Hardy would outline this bill and its impacts to the full board at the meeting.

Whit Blanton updated the committee on the meeting he and Mayor Cookie Kennedy had with Congressman Charlie Crist. They spoke with him about Forward Pinellas and current initiatives in Pinellas County. The Central Ave BRT project was discussed along with safety efforts being undertaken through our Vision Zero campaign. The congressman was invited to attend the upcoming Safe Streets Pinellas Summit. He agreed to send a staffer as he was personally unavailable and agreed to produce a video with Forward Pinellas to support these efforts. Additionally, it was highlighted that currently highway safety funds are prohibited from being spent on education per

the FAST Act. Congressman Crist said he would support changes in the next re-authorization to allow funds to be spent on education.

Whit Blanton also updated the group on a recent visit to Tallahassee made by himself and Commissioner Suzy Sofer in conjunction with the Suncoast League of Cities that was very productive.

After query by Commissioner Eggers, Whit Blanton offered information to the group in follow up to the Pinellas County Day meetings with FDOT. Specifically, the Dunedin Causeway and park entrance solutions and funding options were outlined.

The group briefly discussed the status of the Drew Street engineering study with next steps and time frames.

Lastly, Mr. Blanton updated the group on a recent meeting with Senator Hooper, FDOT and local property owners adjacent to Republic Drive to discuss the bicycle and pedestrian underpass.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

## Legislative Committee – March 11, 2020

### 3. Legislative Update and Discussion



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#### SUMMARY

Forward Pinellas staff will provide an update on state bills of interest and any staff action related to the legislative session.

Staff is closely monitoring SB 410/HB 203 and SB 1000/HB 1371.

Below are links to the latest updates provided by partner agencies.

#### ATTACHMENT(S):

- SB 7054 Amendment
- [MPOAC Newsletter](#)
- [APA Florida Bill Tracking Report](#)
- [APA Florida Legislative Reporter](#)

**ACTION:** None required; informational item only; or as deemed appropriate by the committee



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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and  
Economic Development (Taddeo) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Between lines 463 and 464

insert:

Section 12. Subsection (3) of section 338.166, Florida  
Statutes, is amended to read:

338.166 High-occupancy toll lanes or express lanes.—

(3) Any remaining toll revenue from the high-occupancy toll  
lanes or express lanes shall be used by the department for the  
construction, maintenance, or improvement of any road or any



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11 public transportation project on the State Highway System within  
12 the county or counties in which the toll revenues were collected  
13 or to support express bus service on the facility where the toll  
14 revenues were collected.

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16 ===== T I T L E   A M E N D M E N T =====

17 And the title is amended as follows:

18       Delete line 48

19 and insert:

20       first refusal; amending s. 338.166, F.S.; expanding  
21       purposes for which the department is required to use  
22       remaining toll revenue from high-occupancy toll lanes  
23       or express lanes; amending s. 339.135, F.S.;  
24       conforming