

Mr. Roland DeBlois, Environmental and Code Enforcement Chief, provided background of the County's 1990 adoption of the more conservative CON-2 zoning as opposed to the previous default RS-1 designation for properties along the wetlands, and that the RS-1 zoning functions as a 'holding zoning' until an estuary wetlands survey is prepared to determine specific CON-2 boundaries.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Brognano, SECONDED BY Ms. Waldrop, the members voted unanimously (5-0) to approve staff recommendations on this Quasi-Judicial matter.**

Chairman Polackwich read the following into the record:

- C.** An ordinance of Indian River County, Florida, amending the text of the sanitary sewer sub-element, future land use element, and coastal management element of the County's Comprehensive Plan and providing codification, severability, and effective date. **[Legislative]**

**Part 1:** Sanitary sewer sub-element amendments and related amendments to the Future Land Use Element.

Mr. William Schutt, Senior Economic Development Planner, detailed proposed edits relating to sanitary sewer in the Future Land Use Element and gave a PowerPoint presentation, copies of which are on file in the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Office. He recommended that the Commissioners recommend that the BCC approve the proposed Future Land Use Element Comprehensive Plan text amendments for transmittal to state and regional review agencies.

Ms. Judy Orcott, Chairperson of the Lagoon Committee for Indian River Neighborhood Association, reported that the County's fertilizer ordinance has been proven to reduce the amount of nitrogen levels in the lagoon. She addressed the approximate 35,000 septic systems in the County and the time and financial obstacles involved in either improving these current systems and treatment methods or ideally connecting to County sewer. She explained that the septic systems installed prior to 1983 have only a six-inch separation between the ground water and the drainfield whereas those installed after 1982 require twenty-four inches, adding that approximately half of the County's septic systems have only the six-inch separation. She recommended that as older systems are issued repair permits, they be required to raise the drainfield to the current code of twenty-four inches. She inquired about possible mandatory connections as sewer infrastructures are created and stated her hope for higher annual goals for

the County to convert septic systems to sewer connections. She concluded by discussing the biosolids that are allowed to be spread on Indian River County farmland and ultimately end up in our water systems.

Ms. Cheryl Dunn, Environmental Health Manager, discussed permits for repairs, modifications and new septic systems that her office is responsible for administering. She explained that her department can “encourage” homeowners to meet the twenty-four-inch separation between the drainfield and groundwater but that it is voluntary and unenforceable at this time for septic systems installed before 1983. She indicated that as the septic contractors typically pull repair permits, there is little to no communication between the homeowner and her department until final inspections are performed. She described the significant cost to individual homeowners to raise the drainfields, adding that for some smaller properties it could be challenging because there may not be enough lawn space available. She advised that while there are currently no funds or incentives offered for homeowners to upgrade their drainfield or treatment systems, her wish is that they will become available at least for areas that while sewer connection is not a reality, sewage may be impacting the lagoon.

Mr. Vincent Burke, Utility Services Director, outlined mandates for new subdivisions and commercial development to connect to county sewer as well as determinations of mandatory connection for failed septic systems. He compared the costs to repair or upgrade existing septic systems to that of connecting to County sewer or the ultimate cost to the environment if neither option is chosen. He stated that the creation of new sewer infrastructure includes not only the price of sewer lines and pump systems, but the destruction of roadways, making these projects a public works issue as well. He concluded that his department continues to apply for grants from the State, District and the National Estuary Program (NEP) and that additional funding could shorten the timelines needed to connect communities to the County sewer system.

Extensive discussion followed regarding County staff’s commitment to pursue and identify opportunities to address goals, objectives and policies relating to sanitary sewer connections and septic systems.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Stewart, SECONDED BY Ms. Waldrop, the members voted unanimously (5-0) to approve staff recommendations on this Legislative matter with language added regarding the County’s commitment to pursue and identify opportunities.**

**Part 2:** Coastal management element amendments and related amendments to the Future Land Use Element.