

DeSoto Decision Pending

April 4, 2019



Back to the commissioners. The commissioners will decide at the next meeting the result of this first phase of mediation. That is the end result of yesterday's all-day session in Arcadia, with Special Magistrate Terrance Schmidt.

Those who arrived yesterday, April 3, 2019 with hopes to speak to the Magistrate had to quickly change plans and wing it, as previous instructions as to the rules were changed.



Early arrivals made sure they got their names on the speaker list. Percy Angelo, Paul Degaeta, Sarah Hollenhorst, John Ryan and Marian Ryan. Percy, Sarah and Marian are on the Sierra Club Phosphate Committee, along with your historian.

Guidelines for speaking stated that the public's comments should be confined to topics they touched on at the July, 2018 meeting. But Magistrate Schmidt changed this to comments directed only to DeSoto County Attorney Don Conn's comments regarding steps forward from this meeting. He did not want to hear anything regarding negative or positive elements of phosphate mining.

As public comment moved forward, Magistrate Schmidt time and time again, patiently had to admonish speakers to keep to Counselor Conn's observations. Passionate that they were, most speakers managed to keep close to their original mine-bashing issues. As the long hours wore on, the Magistrate seemed to tire and became more and more lenient with the public.

Mosaic had earlier suggested a time scheme lasting until January of 2023, during which time they would not reapply for the re-zoning permit. Other points within this plan would perhaps include up to nine workshops with topics relating to:

1. mining basics
- 2 CSAs (clay settling areas)
3. protecting health
4. water quantity, quality and drainage
5. natural resources and wildlife
6. reclamation
7. economic effects of mining
8. transportation basics,
9. DeSoto permitting process.

Another issue not at all popular with the public was the combining of re-zoning, mine application and environmental permits all into one. Several legal-savvy speakers pointed out that if re-zoning were allowed, then denial of a permit could possibly bring the Bert Harris Act into play in Mosaic's favor.

Mosaic maintains that the re-zoning denial in July was not an application to mine, only to re-zone to permit mining, so anti-mine comments were not relevant. This is course is absurd, as the first step in mining is zoning of the land.

Mosaic stated in their opening comments, that they planned to be present in DeSoto County for the long term; they were not going away.



JC Deriso

Thus, postponing the application for four years would give Mosaic time to work on getting commissioners who might be persuaded to vote favorably on mining issues. We already have one new commissioner since last July, JC Deriso, who is in the land reclamation business and whom your historian sat next to during the meeting.

One other commissioner who stayed the length of the long meeting was hero Elton Langford, who led the way to denial last July.



Commissioner Elton Langford with
DeSoto County Attorney Don Conn

So many speakers, including your historian representing OSFR, expressed the opinion and hopes that the DeSoto Board of County Commissioners would stand firm in their July decision to deny mining in the county, and were opposed to mediation and workshops and a four-year delay.



Marian Ryan
Mele



Sarah Hollenhorst



Andy



Percy Angelo
Ralf Brooks



Robert N. Hartsell

Attorney Ralf Brooks gave sound reasons why the denial last July would be sustained in court. Other strong speakers included Brooks Armstrong, Sarah Hollenhorst (“Denial not Delay”), Andy Mele, Nancy Armstrong (“Hardee Co. is full of fear, apathy and greed”) , Molly Bowen, Garrett Ramey, Rachael Curran and many, many more. Strong advocate Louella Phillips was unable to arrive in time to speak but was present for the later sessions.



Nancy Armstrong
Ryan



Molly Bowen

John



Ena Faye Esemé
Curran



Garrett Ramey



Rachael

During public comments only one person went to the podium to speak for Mosaic.

OSFR thanks all who spent their day for the fight against mining and the destruction of Florida.

We will keep you posted as the fight goes on.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-
