

Marion County Commissioners Postpone Land Use Amendments Issue

December 18, 2018



Because of a last minute letter from a developer, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners decided to postpone facing a land use issue at Tuesday's Dec. 18, 2018 meeting. The county attorney strongly recommended postponement and was able to convince the board to follow his advice, contrary to the desires of a staff member who had worked on the language, and who complained that "...at the eleventh hour we are taking it all

apart..” and deemed it unnecessary.

As did several members of the public who expressed disappointment at taking time off from work and/or driving some distance only to find things were not as advertised.



Janet Barrow, one of the strongest opponents of Sabal Trail and LNG

Nevertheless, Chairwoman Stone gave permission to speak to those who so desired, all the while warning that the facts they were referring to today might not be relevant at the Jan. 15, 2019 meeting, date she chose for the issue to be decided by the board.

Since the amendments deal with development, the rural way of life and urban sprawl, as was expected, several land developers were present and expressed strong views – some would say thinly veiled threats of litigation if their needs were not met.

Marion County is home to Top Of The World, second largest (at ten thousand residents) urban sprawl in Florida. Although at one time, someone described the Marion commissioners as “never having seen a development they didn’t like,” that may have been true, but about a year and a half ago, this board denied a

permit requested by AZ Ocala Ranch, who wanted to rezone about 3,500 acres for development. That was a battle won, even though the war is not over. The previous speaker may have had the shameless, inexcusable debacle of Silver Springs in mind.

Among the many speaking in support of the amendments were Whitey Markle of Sierra Club, Janet Barrow who opposed Sabal Trail, Charles Lee of Audubon, and your Historian.

We hope to report on the Jan. 15 meeting of a steadfast board who does not allow further uncontrolled urban sprawl.



Whitey Markle of Sierra Club, is a tireless worker who travels constantly.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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