



March 5, 2021

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Commissioner Bryan Lober, District 2

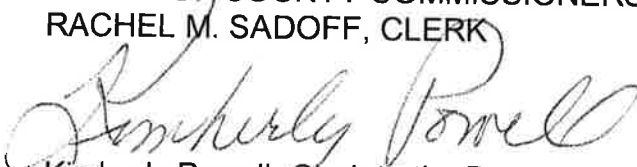
RE: Item L.4., Resolution Opposing Senate Bill (SB) 62 – Regional Planning Councils

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on March 4, 2021, adopted Resolution No. 21-018, opposing any efforts of SB 62 to deauthorize or otherwise weaken Regional Planning Councils. Enclosed is the fully-executed Resolution.

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RACHEL M. SADOFF, CLERK


Kimberly Powell, Clerk to the Board

/ds

Encl. (1)

RESOLUTION
21- 018 IN OPPOSITION TO SB 62

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 62 (hereinafter "SB 62") deauthorizes the ten Regional Planning Councils (hereinafter "RPCs") and eliminates, within the State of Florida, RPCs' advisory role in state comprehensive plan preparation and revision; and

WHEREAS, SB 62 passed through the Community Affairs Committee with a 6 to 3 vote; and

WHEREAS, RPCs are beacons of home rule which amplify the input and influence of local elected officials into numerous infrastructure, connectivity, resiliency, economic development, public safety (including emergency preparedness), and environmental preservation projects and initiatives (including brownfield cleanup), especially those which span into adjoining counties; and

WHEREAS, RPCs are essential in enabling and facilitating intergovernmental solutions to region-specific multijurisdictional issues; and

WHEREAS, RPCs garner involvement of not only elected officials from counties but also elected officials of a multitude of the municipalities contained therein; and

WHEREAS, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (hereinafter "ECFRPC") serves our region's unique needs far better than state entities headquartered 300 miles away could realistically serve them; and

WHEREAS, the ECFRPC covers more than four million residents (approximately one-fifth the population of the State of Florida) in an area encompassing Brevard, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia Counties as well as the seventy eight municipalities located therein; and

WHEREAS, the ECFRPC at all times values and, to the greatest extent reasonably feasible, adopts and incorporates the needs and goals articulated by Brevard County and the municipalities contained therein; and

WHEREAS, Brevard County is represented on the ECFRPC's Executive Committee, better ensuring Brevard County's interests are represented at all levels of the organization; and

WHEREAS, without the ECFRPC, smaller cities in Brevard County lacking sufficient internal resources are likely to disproportionately suffer from numerous lost opportunities to secure federal funding given the technical support, grant writing, and administration assistance of the ECFRPC; and

WHEREAS, we incorporate, by reference, the benefits articulated by the following entities which have passed resolutions and/or written letters opposing SB 62:

Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization
Space Coast League of Cities
City of Indian River
City of Indian Harbour Beach
City of Satellite Beach

and numerous similarly situated entities, outside of Brevard County, including, but not limited to:

Volusia County
Volusia County League of Cities
Orange County
Tri-County League of Cities
City of DeLand
River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE BREVARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

We call upon the Brevard County Legislative Delegation ("Legislative Delegation"), consisting of Senators Tom A. Wright (14th Dist.) and Debbie Mayfield (17th Dist.) and Representatives Rene Plasencia (Dist. 50), Tyler Sirois (Dist. 51), Thad Altman (Dist. 52), and Randy Fine (Dist. 53), to oppose any efforts to deauthorize or otherwise weaken Regional Planning Councils.

DONE, ORDERED AND ADOPTED this 4th day of March, 2021.

ATTEST:


RACHEL SADOFF, CLERK
RITA PRITCHETT, CHAIR
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Deborah Thomas

Lober

Board Report

From: Donna Scott
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 11:08 AM
To: Clerk to the Board
Subject: FW: Resolutions for board report
Attachments: Resolution Supporting HB 35 (Newspaper Legal Ad) rev 10AM 3-4-2021.docx;
Resolution Opposing SB 62 (Deauthorizing RPCs) rev 10AM 3-4-2021.docx

From: Lober, Bryan <Bryan.Lober@brevardfl.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 10:54 AM
To: Lewis, Sally A <Sally.Lewis@brevardfl.gov>
Cc: Abbate, Frank B <Frank.Abbate@brevardfl.gov>; Commissioner, D2 <D2.Commissioner@brevardfl.gov>; Donna Scott <donna.scott@brevardclerk.us>
Subject: Resolutions for board report

Sally:

Can we send this out in advance of tonight's meeting? I was planning to discuss in board reports. It may end up getting continued to the next meeting but I figure that it's ready to go now.

Thanks,

Bryan

"Under Florida Law, email addresses are Public Records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to public record requests, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing."

did
Not
approve

RESOLUTION
21-_____ IN SUPPORT OF HB 35

WHEREAS, local governments are funded almost entirely through the collection of taxes; and

WHEREAS, the government has only a handful of core obligations including maintaining public safety and ensuring the availability of adequate infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, all unnecessary expenditures the government pursues necessarily reduces funding available to pursue the legitimate obligations of government and/or result in excessive collection of taxes; and

WHEREAS, prior to the advent of the internet, our state's legislature enacted requirements pertaining to the manner in which local governments must notice certain legal actions (hereinafter "public notice(s)"); and

WHEREAS, such legal actions frequently and regularly occur in the ordinary course of governmental business, in particular with respect to matters involving real property (e.g., vacating rights-of-way and easements); and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned statutory requirements are, definitionally, unfunded mandates; and

WHEREAS, "government subsidized" is, in practice, indistinguishable from "taxpayer subsidized," and

WHEREAS, taxpayers should not be forced to subsidize a declining business model which is verging on obsolescence; and

WHEREAS, newspapers, including Florida Today, have, as an objective fact, faced declining readerships of printed newspapers; and

WHEREAS, newspapers, including Florida Today, have, in clear awareness of this trend focused their efforts at expanding their online presence and reach, keenly aware that the print industry has been and remains in a steady decline; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2020, the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter "BoCC") directed staff to research options which might lower the amount Brevard County must expend to remain in compliance with § 50.011 & § 50.031, Fla. Stat., both of which deal with public notice requirements; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2020, staff returned a report to the BoCC indicating that only one entity, *Florida Today*, unambiguously meets the requirements laid out by § 50.011 & § 50.031; and

WHEREAS, Florida Today, has enjoyed a longstanding monopoly in which it may, absent competition for public notices advertisements, set artificially high prices; and

WHEREAS, in Brevard County, Florida Today cannot claim that they have the greatest online viewership among local media entities; and

WHEREAS, Florida Today's Executive Editor Mara Bellaby, acknowledged, in writing, that "every media entity in the state" utilizes the same exact website for public notice purposes; and

WHEREAS, in conceding the foregoing, Florida Today implicitly acknowledges that online viewership is a key factor in reaching the broadest possible audience; and

WHEREAS, even if we took Florida Today's cited readership numbers as indisputable fact, there exists no evidence which suggests that a remotely similar number of individuals who peruse the first page headlines ever make it into the bowels wherein public notices are printed; and

WHEREAS, it is unclear how many, if any, individuals have ever taken action for or against a particular noticed item based upon having learned of that item in the public notice section of Florida Today; and

WHEREAS, while it is admirable to hold those in power accountable, Florida Today is hardly a neutral purveyor of the news, instead having a well-earned reputation for inequitably aligning with one political party while denigrating another; and

WHEREAS, this longstanding bias is highlighted not only in the manner in which many articles are headlined and repeatedly recycled for increased coverage to tactically strike at local Republican elected officials but also in glossing over significant and meaningful controversy involving elected officials who are members of the Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, Florida Today is widely viewed, in the community, as a partisan mouthpiece for the local Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, Florida Today has manufactured, or at the very least, drummed up controversy only to omit relevant material to make stories as one-sided as possible in an attempt to villainize numerous Republican elected officials; and

WHEREAS, despite holding themselves out as independent journalists, which connotes a lack of bias, Florida Today's advertising department has brazenly demanded, in writing, that at least one duly elected Republican County Commissioner pay for advertisements to tell his side of the story by way of sponsored articles in order to "change the topic of conversation altogether in the community;" (see attached) and

WHEREAS, this blatantly wrongful and unethical action, on the part of Florida Today, is akin to an arsonist trying to sell water to extinguish the blaze which never should have been set; and

WHEREAS, unbiased coverage should allow for elected officials to tell their side of the story without having to reward what amounts to a demand for extortion; and

WHEREAS, as shown on video during the February 11, 2020, BoCC meeting, Florida Today "Watchdog Editor" Bobby Block essentially told the Brevard County Sheriff that those who do not cooperate, with Florida Today, do not receive favorable coverage; and

WHEREAS, this blatantly wrongful and unethical action, on the part of Florida Today, should never be rewarded; and

WHEREAS, Florida Today's Executive Editor Mara Bellaby believes Florida Today is the singular "consistently exclude[d] outlet from public safety media conferences" put on by the Brevard County Sheriff's Office (see attached); and

WHEREAS, multiple elected officials including multiple duly elected county commissioners have justifiably referred to Florida Today as *fake news* and/or as illegitimate; and

WHEREAS, former Cocoa Mayor Henry Parrish stated, in pertinent part, "in 1998, Florida Today offered City of Cocoa staff more favorable news coverage in exchange for advertising dollars. Nothing was intimated; the offer was explicit and unambiguous. At that time, FL Today was still savvy enough not to memorialize, in writing, their blatant misconduct and utter lack of journalistic integrity. Pay-to-play extortion has a decades-long history of being a pattern and practice at Florida Today;" and

WHEREAS, Florida Today's flagrant misconduct and attempts to solicit hush money are not new; and

WHEREAS, Brevard County must be mindful with whom it advertises public notices as such advertisement could be mistakenly seen as an endorsement of the integrity of the publisher; and

WHEREAS, the only media entity which unambiguously meets the statutory requirements for public notice has been and remains utterly lacking in integrity and has never evidenced that the posting of public notices results in any member of the public learning about a matter and taking a position he or she would not otherwise have taken; and

WHEREAS, the statutory requirements for legal notices to appear in print publications do little to nothing to facilitate public involvement in those matters advertised.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY A MAJORITY/SUPERMAJORITY/ UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BREVARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

We call upon the Brevard County Legislative Delegation ("Legislative Delegation"), consisting of Senators Tom A. Wright (14th Dist.) and Debbie Mayfield (17th Dist.) and Representatives Rene Plasencia (Dist. 50), Tyler Sirois (Dist. 51), Thad Altman (Dist. 52), and Randy Fine (Dist. 53), to support efforts to eliminate the requirement to advertise

public notices in newspapers in favor of more economical, more ubiquitous, online options.

DONE, ORDERED AND ADOPTED this ____th day of March, 2021.

ATTEST:

RACHEL SADOFF, CLERK

RITA PRITCHETT, CHAIR
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Deborah Thomas

From: Lewis, Sally A <Sally.Lewis@brevardfl.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 12:46 PM
To: CGroup
Cc: Cheryl Duisberg; Deborah Thomas; Donna Scott; Kimberly Powell; Nicole Summers; Samantha McDaniel
Subject: FW: Resolutions for board report
Attachments: Resolution Supporting HB 35 (Newspaper Legal Ad) rev 10AM 3-4-2021.docx;
Resolution Opposing SB 62 (Deauthorizing RPCs) rev 10AM 3-4-2021.docx

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached resolutions that will be brought up at tonight's meeting under Board Reports by Commissioner Lober, District 2.

Thank you,
Sally

From: Lober, Bryan
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 10:54 AM
To: Lewis, Sally A <Sally.Lewis@brevardfl.gov>
Cc: Abbate, Frank B <Frank.Abbate@brevardfl.gov>; Commissioner, D2 <D2.Commissioner@brevardfl.gov>; Donna Scott <donna.scott@brevardclerk.us>
Subject: Resolutions for board report

Sally:

Can we send this out in advance of tonight's meeting? I was planning to discuss in board reports. It may end up getting continued to the next meeting but I figure that it's ready to go now.

Thanks,

Bryan

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Bryan <loberb@gmail.com>

PR Campaign

LOBER, Bryan A. <loberb@gmail.com>
To: "Best, Jacquelyn" <jbest@localiq.com>

Thu, Jul 11, 2019 at 9:56 AM

Jacquie:

I have to admit I got a laugh out of your email. Florida Today manufactures and runs half a dozen plus intentionally disingenuous and misleading stories out of a single non-issue and then offers to sell me advertising to "tell [my] side of the story" after having refused to run email commentary of mine for at least one such dishonest article? I was aware Florida Today lacked journalistic integrity but this is a new low and smacks of extortion which I have no intention to reward.

Less than 48 hours ago, the County Commission Chairwoman indicated she doesn't consider Florida Today a legitimate news source and does not comment to it. I've noticed zero recent comments from our duly elected Sheriff, Wayne Ivey, zero from State Rep. Randy Fine, zero from Titusville Police Department, and the list is growing.

Florida Today's move from the Taj Mahal to the equivalent of a thatched roof hut signals that the dwindling readership is not anticipated to improve any time soon.

Please do not contact me about such opportunities in the future.

Kind regards,

Bryan

On Thu, Jul 11, 2019 at 9:42 AM Best, Jacquelyn <jbest@localiq.com> wrote:

Hi Bryan,

I hope you're doing well and wanted to reach out as I've seen a few articles about the recent social media drama. It's a crazy world out there and I'm sorry to see what you're having to deal with.

Just as an idea, I wanted to make sure you know that I can help with any type of advertising campaign you may need – including sponsored articles in print/digital on FloridaToday.com which could help you tell your side of the story or change the topic of conversation altogether in the community.

Keep that in mind if you think it may be helpful.

Thanks,

Jacquie Best
Strategic Business Manager, USA TODAY NETWORK



PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

m: 321.616.4581 | o: 321.242.3841 | jbest@localiq.com
LOCALiQ.com

from Florida Today editor

Bellaby, Mara <mbellaby@floridatoday.com>

Tue 3/3/2020 3:50 PM

To: Commissioner, D2 <D2.Commissioner@brevardfl.gov>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Commissioner Lober,

I was made aware of an item added to the Zoning Board agenda that touches on FLORIDA TODAY.

I know the proposal has been put forward as an effort to save county taxpayers money, but it's hard for me not to see it, at least in part, as part of a continued attack against FLORIDA TODAY. One line even proposes directing the county to pursue advertising "with any media outlet other than Florida Today."

I don't want to tread into political waters nor can I, as executive editor, speak on behalf of advertising costs. My purview is local news coverage. But as a journalist, I think it's important to correct some factual errors in the agenda item and to make sure you have complete information about what FLORIDA TODAY is in this community.

1. The item suggests that public notices in FLORIDA TODAY are behind a subscription pay wall. That is incorrect. We participate, as does every media entity in the state, in making all public notices free and easily accessible to everyone via floridapublicnotices.com. Florida's media has invested significant money in building this website. To date, it has over 32,000 registered users and over 70,000 monthly page views. It's free and easy to use.
2. FLORIDA TODAY's print edition is distributed to homes throughout Brevard County and available in more than 200 retail outlets. On a typical day, floridatoday.com reaches around 75,000 unique viewers.
3. Our parent company, Gannett (which, you are correct, is and has been based in Virginia), employs 84 people in Brevard County, including 29 journalists. We also have just under 100 independent contractors that work from our distribution centers in Palm Bay, Rockledge and Titusville. We own property in Titusville and Palm Bay, on which we pay taxes, and are leasing our new headquarter building on Viera Boulevard.
4. Our staffers sit on boards, volunteer in the community at organizations, churches and schools, they perform in local theater and in venues up and down the Space Coast. This is our home.
5. We are a strong supporter through sponsorships and advertising to local charities around the Space Coast. Here are just some examples: LEAD Brevard, Junior Achievement, Brevard Schools Foundation, Brevard Alzheimer's Foundation, Aging Matters, Harmony Farms, Brevard Achievement Center, Sea Turtle Preservation, Cancer Care Foundation, Space Coast Honor Flight and the list goes on.
6. Last but not least, as independent journalists, a key part of our job is to hold those in power accountable. That often means asking uncomfortable and inconvenient questions and standing up for the public's right to know. Repeatedly, around the nation, studies have found that communities where independent journalists operate are better run with lower taxes and less corruption.

I know you declined an offer of mine to meet last year. I wanted to extend that offer again. I believe it is important to have at least the option of an open dialogue. Separately, I live in your district so we share that in common.

Thank you for your time,

Mara

Mara Bellaby
Editor of FLORIDA TODAY

florida today

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Mobile: 321.626.5771
Office: 321.242.3573
mbellaby@floridatoday.com

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from Florida Today

Bellaby, Mara <mbellaby@floridatoday.com>

Tue 3/24/2020 10:37 AM

To: wayne.ivey@bcso.us <wayne.ivey@bcso.us>

Cc: D1.Commissioner@BrevardFl.gov <D1.Commissioner@BrevardFl.gov>; Commissioner, D2 <D2.Commissioner@brevardfl.gov>; Commissioner, D3 <d3.commissioner@brevardfl.gov>; Commissioner, D4 <D4.Commissioner@brevardfl.gov>; Commissioner, D5 <D5.Commissioner@brevardfl.gov>; tyler.sirois@myfloridahouse.gov <tyler.sirois@myfloridahouse.gov>; randy.fine@myfloridahouse.gov <randy.fine@myfloridahouse.gov>; thad.altman@myfloridahouse.gov <thad.altman@myfloridahouse.gov>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Sheriff Ivey,

I was told by our television colleagues that they were notified via email at least three hours yesterday before your news conference regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic. We didn't receive any notification at FLORIDA TODAY. The notice on your Facebook page only came minutes before the news conference started.

I can only assume we were purposely not informed and I'm appalled, quite frankly.

I know your feelings about FLORIDA TODAY but am shocked you would play this petty level of politics at a time when people's lives are at risk. There's a good chance people in Brevard County could be sickened or die and getting them information has never been more important.

Whether you like it or not, we reach tens of thousands of primarily elderly people with our print edition. This is the age group most at risk. Additionally, we have been reaching more than 140,000 individuals every single day with our online coverage at floridatoday.com, which we have made free to everyone.

It is unconscionable to me that you would let your own personal feelings impact the need to get information to a broad section of the Brevard community via every means available. To consistently exclude one outlet from public safety media conferences is hard for me to understand.

I am cc'ing other elected officials because they need to know.

Mara

Mara Bellaby

Editor of FLORIDA TODAY

florida today

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Mobile: 321.626.5771

Office: 321.242.3573

mbellaby@floridatoday.com

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Bryan <loberb@gmail.com>

For the record... FL Today

Henry Parrish <pgicocoavillage@gmail.com>

Fri, Jul 12, 2019 at 11:07 PM

To: bouldes22@gmail.com, Palermo.Tom@gmail.com, Giles Malone <GilesMalone@gmail.com>, loberb@gmail.com

Just wanted to share with you my history with FT.

As I came to learn through public service, in 1998, Florida Today offered City of Cocoa staff more favorable news coverage in exchange for advertising dollars. Nothing was intimated; the offer was explicit and unambiguous. At that time, FL Today was still savvy enough not to memorialize, in writing, their blatant misconduct and utter lack of journalistic integrity. Pay-to-play extortion has a decades-long history of being a pattern and practice at Florida Today.

Sincerely,

HUP III

Sent from my iPhone