

Subject: RE: Protection of Agricultural Lands

Correspondence 3/26/18 with redacted addresses and numbers

From: Bonnie Michaels <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 26, 2018 10:10 PM
To: RLSArestudy <RLSArestudy@colliercountyfl.gov>
Subject: Re: Protection of Agricultural Lands

Hello Kris,
the email below is from me. I don't understand why it appeared to be from Bonnie Michaels.

Michael Seef

tel: [REDACTED]

In a message dated 3/26/2018 4:21:45 PM Eastern Standard Time, RLSArestudy@colliercountyfl.gov writes:

Is this e-mail from Bonnie Michaels or Michael Seef?

Respectfully,

Kris Van Lengen, MPA, JD, AICP

Community Planning Manager



Note: Email address change 12/9/2017

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From: Bonnie Michaels [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 26, 2018 10:35 AM
To: RLSArestudy <RLSArestudy@colliercountyfl.gov>
Subject: Protection of Agricultural Lands

March 26, 2018

Kris, below are my comments and also attached.

Following up on the meeting Thursday "Protection of Agricultural Lands", it seems there are no real protections in place. The acreage has declined from actual 94,498 acres in 2002 (phase 1 committee report) to the 40,000 acreage of 2008 based on credits compiled by WilsonMiller the landowners' consultant. Table 4.3 "Proposed maturity Overlay Revised and Recalibrated" report compiled the credits and acreages. The WM arcane basis and process was coined "voodoo math" because no one seemed to follow its extreme complexity. I tried with minimal success.

It was very informative that every table at our meeting gave a consensus top ranking of 10 to the need of preserving agricultural acreage. An outside unbiased arbiter would be perplexed.

There were numerous reasons given by each table for the consensus of 10 including mine, as follows:

1. Agricultural independence becomes more important as we have grown to import over 50% for many crops. Also the associated issue of food safety with unregulated imports is of critical importance as was indicated by two speakers. Considering NAFTA and tariffs negotiations currently in process adds even greater significance to maintaining significant amounts of agriculture in the foreseeable future. Also we need to consider climate and drought affects in California's central valley and other imported food sources which are projected and could be a boon to Collier's crop output and prices. It would be especially important in economic downturns to retain agriculture's relative stability and labor employment
2. Agriculture provides a major source of revenue and jobs to the county.

Another consideration brought by our 3rd speaker and not previously addressed in the 2008 study is that proximity to new towns by agricultural operations such as spraying (by air) and impacting nearby habitations by water issues. Another issue not properly addressed is having islands of towns and islands of disconnected agricultural areas. This disconnected quilt pattern would greatly impact agricultural productivity. It would also impact the number of roads their costs to the public and road planning.

The phase 2 report has words on preventing "premature conversion" of agriculture to (intensive) development. Workshop tables questioned this undefined term. Therefore reliance

on “voluntary elimination of property owner’s rights” has no useful meaning since on incentives were indicated. Premature conversion implies that wetlands would be filled and concrete poured prematurely. This would be disastrous to retaining any agricultural expansion in the future and to habitat preservation of open or sensitive lands. As indicated above it could also impact putting in roads prematurely with attendant public cost impacts.

With respect to the meeting, the 15 minutes allocated was quite insufficient to consider the 6 dense policies and then coming up with creative ideas for incentives. It would be helpful in future to limit lengthy presentations which don’t contribute much to the workshop. The number of policies involved should be limited to at most 2 or 3 at a time. They also should be presented verbally before asking people to relate to them. Suggest that policy material be put on-line and mentioned to your mailing list prior to a workshop.

Thank you again for all your extensive work on this program and considering comments.

Michael Seef

tel: [REDACTED]

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