

**AT A SPECIAL MEETING (RETREAT) OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 12, 2017
AT 4:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS
HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Brenda Holt, District 4, Chair, -Present**
 Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2 - Present
 Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1 - Present
 Gene Morgan, District 3 - Absent
 Sherrie Taylor, District 5 -Absent
 Dee Jackson, Interim County Administrator
 David Weiss, County Attorney
 Beryl H. Wood, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 4:48 p.m. at Tri – Eagle Sales. She thanked the staff for all they do.

Mrs. Jackson thanked all for coming.

Dr. Alvin Jackson, Jr., facilitator did introductions. He said he had been in government for 35 years and it started in Eatonville, Florida. He said he enjoyed the last session they had and they would continue their discussion on Economic Development. He shared how Eatonville had capitalized their market by showcasing and sharing with the world the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities which was a literary festival with 1.5 million visitors that have attended and would celebrate its 29th year next month. He said she was known as one of the greatest literary voices of the Harlem Renaissance and this festival celebrated her work and she grew up in Eatonville. He further stated the festival lifted the entire community.

He then gave a review of the last time they met. He discussed how they work through public policy and gave a handout on how to be an Effective Board Member.

- Attributes for Effective Leaders & Stewards
- Engage people and their energies
- Inspire yourself and others to do very best
- Focus on future and get agreement on common vision, goals, priorities and direction
- Empower and support
- Engender a perspective of “we” and partnership
- Principled
- Promote mutual respect and civility

PR position

He said the Department of Public Communication told the story and told the community what you were doing. He said each department would feed success to the communication department and this was an important person.

He said there should be a purpose for budgets to implement the strategic goals.

1. Think and Act Strategically
2. Respect and Share Constituency
3. Understand and Demonstrate the Elements of Teams and Teamwork

Leslie Stelle, City Manager for Midway, said her focus was on Highway 90 with the different entities.

Adjourned for a break at 5:40 returned at 5:53 p.m.

What is Strategic Thinking?

Chair Holt said strategic thinking was important for coming up with your own dynamic strategy.

She mentioned characteristic of strategic change such as a Bi -Annual Budget and it forced you to think long term.

Mr. Jackson issued a hand out on Issues for Florida Communities 1.

Commission Hinson said he felt it was important to learn how to accept someone's opinion.

Commissioner Viegbesie commented in order to move forward we had to build trust.

More discussion followed.

Strengths of Community

- Land
- Transportation
- Interstate
- Population that is willing to work – Work Ethic
- Easy Access to Satellite Education
- Emergency Room
- Good People
- Business Parks
- Open mind
- Freight of Zone
- Law Enforcement
- Quality of Life
- Community togetherness
- REDI Community

Weakness Problems

- Training (lack)
- Lack of local college
- Lack of Hospital
- Lack of PR
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Jobs
- Funding
- Branding
- Schools
- Super majority vote
- Lack of partnership w/local education, institutes
- Lack of water & sewer(infrastructure)
- Land Use changes - Map for Commercial

Opportunities – prioritize opportunities

- Creative utilization of land – overlays
- Expansion of the Arts (historic landmarks, theater, art, coca-cola, culture)
- Development of interstate exchange
- Increased collaboration with FAMU, TCC, FSU, GTI
- Marketing of assets/PR
- Digital infrastructure plan
- Healthcare
- Creation of polices that proactively address future growth
- Economic Growth

Land & creative utilization – It was suggested that an AAU Tournament could be beneficial and land was available in Gadsden County. Gave an example of Ashley County (Tourism County).

Threats

- Lack of cooperation (personal, political...)
- Lack of understanding /education of leadership
- Lack of infrastructure
- Super-majority vote for land-use/permitting
- Provision of essential services

- Indigent care

Commissioner Hinson discussed Community College coming to the area. He said small counties could come in.

Consensus was to schedule another meeting in near future.

Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED IT ADJOURNED AT 7:38 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BRENDA HOLT, CHAIR
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, CLERK