



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE LANDOWNERS OF THE
LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT
HELD ON JANUARY 10, 2024 AT 9:00 A.M.**

Attendees:

James M. Alderman
Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr.
Reagan Walker
Karen Hoyt
Nicole Smith
Sandra Acosta
Harry Raucher

Stephen Bedner
John I. Whitworth, III
Tommy Strowd
Anthony LasCasas
Shawn Mitchell
Steve Horowitz
Theodore Winsberg

Carrie Hill
Mark Perry
Megan Hoffman
Brian Tilles
Gary Robeson
Juan Tobar

1. Call to Order

Tommy Strowd called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

John I. Whitworth, III led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Presentation of Advertised Meeting Notice

Ms. Walker confirmed that the legal advertisement for the Landowners' Meeting was published according to noticing requirements.

4. Nomination and Election of Meeting Chairman and Secretary

Mr. Strowd opened nominations for Chairman of the meeting. Stephen Bedner nominated Harry Raucher. John I Whitworth, III, seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, a unanimous vote was cast for Harry Raucher.

Chairman Raucher opened nominations for Secretary of the meeting. John I. Whitworth, III, nominated Theodore Winsberg. Carrie Hill seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, a unanimous vote was cast for Theodore Winsberg to serve as Secretary of the landowners meeting.

5. Call for Ballots and Proxies for Board of Supervisors Election Sub-Districts 3 & 5 and Announcement of Election Results

Chairman Raucher stated that the Sub-District 3 & 5 seats were up for election. He stated that the incumbents were the only qualified candidates that submitted their notice of their intent to run – Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr. for Sub-District 3, and John I. Whitworth, III for Sub-District 5.

Chairman Raucher stated in accordance with the published meeting procedures, given there is only one qualified candidate for each of these sub-districts, the election shall be concluded by a verbal affirmation of the landowners present.

Chairman Raucher asked for a motion to accept election of Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr. as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 3.

Carrie Hill made a motion to accept the election of as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 3. Stephen Bedner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Raucher asked for a motion to accept election of John I. Whitworth, III as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 5.

Stephen Bedner made a motion to accept the election of John I. Whitworth, III as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 5. Carrie Hill seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Minutes - January 4, 2023 Landowners' Meeting

Landowners were provided time to review the minutes of the 2023 Landowners' Meeting. Chairman Raucher asked for comments. With no comments, Chairman Raucher called for a motion to approve the 2023 meeting minutes. John I. Whitworth, III made a motion to approve the minutes, Stephen Bedner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Annual Report to Landowners

Executive Director & District Engineer Tommy Strowd presented a report reflecting on the District's annual activities, accomplishments, and progress. A report summary is provided herein. A copy of the presentation is provided as part of the meeting record.

In 2023, the Lake Worth Drainage District (LWDD) experienced near-average rainfall overall, with no significant flood events and normal water supply operations. However, the fall and winter months saw above-average rainfall, attributed to the 2023-2024 El Niño event. Projections indicate this trend will continue through Spring 2024. The current water stage for Lake Okeechobee stands at 16.00 ft. NGVD, about one foot above normal, which could impact lake littoral zones, coastal estuaries, and the Everglades, though water supply potential remains favorable. A new Lake Regulation Schedule is anticipated in Spring 2024.

Over the years, LWDD has enhanced its water management capabilities by automating real-time monitoring systems, including SCADA, SmartCover stage monitors, real-time rain gauges, and SFWMD data. This year, the District partnered with eRIS to develop an integrated dashboard that compiles and displays information from the multiple platforms into one dashboard, streamlining operational decision-making.

In December 2023, the C-51 Reservoir received the SFWMD permit to commence Phase I operations for water deliveries to Broward and Miami-Dade counties. LWDD received \$380,000 for prior planning expenses and will be reimbursed for future operational costs.

Refurbishment of Control Structure #9 is progressing as planned. Construction of key components were completed in 2023 included the demolition of the existing pump houses, installation of pumps and advanced control systems, including SCADA technology, and the addition of variable frequency drives for pumps and needle racks, which have significantly enhanced operational performance. As part of the ongoing improvements, the radial gates are scheduled to be replaced in January 2024.

The District continues to make progress on the development of a District-Wide Surface Water Model. Phase 1 was completed in 2022 and included sub-basin delineation and conveyance features. In 2023, Phase 2 was completed with the collection of canal geometry and culvert information. Phase 3a was also completed which included compiling hydrologic and hydraulic components and development of a functional model. Phase 3b will continue in 2024 with resting and calibration of the model v. historic rainfall events. A final report (to supersede the prior 'Interbasin Study 1996 rev' is on schedule to be completed in 2025.

Since the Canal Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Phase I began in October 2015, the District has achieved 99% completion, clearing 171.7 miles of vegetation on its canal rights-of-way: LWDD - 85.4 miles; contractor – 80.3 miles; 3rd party – 6.0 miles. There were 10.0 miles cleared in 2023. The remaining 1.4 miles are expected to be cleared in 2024. Mr. Strowd presented before and after photos of completed projects in 2023.

Coordination of CRP projects is a District-wide effort requiring participation by all staff. In support of the program, staff completed the following activities in 2023: researched and mapped right-of-way ownership for all remaining canal rights-of-way; field staked approximately 11 miles of canal right-of-way; prepared and distributed approximately 350 notification letters via hand and mail delivery; captured GoPro 360-degree video segments of all project areas for advance inspection of the canals; addressed approximately 75 project-specific public inquiries; hosted 3 project-specific public outreach meetings with residents and neighborhood associations; and continually updated information and project statuses on the District's website.

In 2023, staff completed an inventory of canal projects that fall under Canal Rehabilitation Program Phase II. The goal of CRP Phase II is to reconstruct, realign and rehabilitate canals for future sustainable maintenance. The inventory includes 500 projects over 250 miles for completion within 20 years. Projects were categorized by complexity, from minor repairs to major structural improvements.

To maintain cleared rights-of-way, the Low Maintenance Team expanded in 2023 and is currently maintaining ~35 miles of low-maintenance right-of-way with plans to add 30 miles in 2024.

Routine maintenance included mowing over 3,000 miles of rights-of-way – 1,524 miles of flat mowing (381 miles, 4x per year) and 1,482 miles of slope mowing (494 miles, 3x per year). This District contracted an additional 500 miles of flat mowing (125 miles, 4x per year) and 560 miles of slope mowing (140 miles, 4x per year) for \$277,000. Staff also treated 6,142 acres of aquatic vegetation – 983 acres of floating vegetation, 1,330 acres of submerged vegetation, 754 acres of littoral vegetation, and 3,076 acres of littoral/floating combined treatment. Staff also treated approximately 700 acres of terrestrial treatments on restricted low-maintenance banks. The District continued use of contracted aquatic services for treatment north of the C-51 Canal and in the Boca Basin for \$93,000. To help manage aquatic weeds and trash, staff are maintaining a total of 183 boom sites throughout District canals. In 2023, 18 booms were replaced due to wear and tear. Staff continued mechanical removal of aquatic vegetation at boom sites to supplement chemical treatments.

The District installed 20 new access gates at arterial and local roads where warranted. Approximately 25 miles of routine canal dredging was completed to maintain conveyance and remedy shoaling, and approximately 23 miles of canal were vertical side-trimmed to remedy encroaching vegetation.

District staff continued to perform regular maintenance services on 14 major water control structures; 140 routine preventative maintenance tasks were completed.

District staff continues to maintain a fleet of 61 vehicles, 37 machines/heavy equipment, 11 tractor mowers, and 8 boats. Equipment usage is tracked and reported quarterly. Utilization averaged 53% for 2023. Mower usage averaged 63%.

Major campus improvements included installation of a new roof on the west wing of the main office building.

In 2023, the District processed 400 right-of-way applications and issued 397 permits. Staff tracked 2,715 permit compliance deliverables for 1,371 individual permits and realized a 94% compliance rate; 15% of the deliverables are recurring annual deliverables.

The District completed the mapping of the remaining 16 miles of LWDD canal right-of-way ownership, finalizing the mapping of all 492.6 miles of the system. Staff also researched and responded to 1,882 Chancery Case 407 review requests and conducted 652 plat and development reviews for county and municipal projects.

The District opened 231 new compliance cases and resolved or closed 223 cases. The District estimates ~1,500 legacy compliance issues that staff are working to resolve. If cases are not resolved through current compliance processes, a Notice of Encroachment is recorded in the public record to notify current/future owners. Future removal of encroachments is prioritized based on canal bank restoration schedules Mr. Strowd presented before and after photos of several resolved encroachment issues in 2023.

The District's outreach team responded to 600+ public inquiries and continues to maintain the agency's presence on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In. The District's monthly "Reflections" newsletter is distributed

to 4,000+ subscribers. The District also hosted its 8th annual flood control workshop for HOAs and property managers and added a public outreach specialist position to assist with outreach efforts.

The District adopted a Fiscal Year 2024 budget totaling \$16.5 million. The non-ad valorem assessment rate remained unchanged at \$49.50. District auditors issued an unqualified opinion for FY2022 and confirmed that the financial records and statements were fairly and appropriately stated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

In FY2023, the District received \$917,000 in revenues for permit fees, \$2,000 in quit claim deeds, \$1.7 million in interest earnings, \$127,000 in tower lease payments, \$134,000 for sale of surplus equipment.

The District's Hazard Mitigation Fund is fully funded at \$17.6 million. The District's capital projects funding totals approximately \$30 million for future infrastructure and water supply improvements.

Over the past 10-15 years, the District has maintained costs for salaries, healthcare, and property/casualty insurance costs. The total number of staff has not increased in the past 14 years; the district is budgeted for 90 positions, with 4 current vacancies. Current employees average 10.5 years of service; 13 employees were hired 2023. Four employees retired in 2023 – 25 employees retired in the past 5 years; and 10 employees are enrolled in DROP and will be retiring within the next 8 years.

Looking ahead, the District will continue Phase II of the Canal Rehabilitation Program which includes restoration of low-maintenance canal banks and management of existing structural encroachments on rights-of-way remaining following the Phase I vegetation removal projects. The District will also continue ongoing capital projects including secondary control structure remediation and enhancements and completion of the District-wide hydrologic modeling effort. The District continues to address regional water supply challenges, collaborate on the Lake Okeechobee Operating Schedule and Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan, and coordinate with Turnpike widening projects to preserve canal integrity.

Mr. Strowd stated that the 2023 Report to Landowners provides an overview of the District's annual activities, including District activities undertaken in furtherance of the adopted water control plan. He recommended acceptance of the report pursuant to Florida Statutes, Ch. 298.26.

A motion was made by John I. Whitworth, III to approve the report, seconded by Stephen Bedner and approved unanimously.

Mr. Bedner inquired about the status of the gopher tortoise relocation along the L-5 Canal at Pine Jog. Mr. Las Casas stated the District is awaiting the necessary agreements to be signed by Florida Atlantic University. Once received, the initial steps will include clearing a fence line and installing a temporary construction fence. Additional work, such as tree clearing, obstruction removal, and canal realignment, will follow. The installation of the permanent fence is planned for late summer, pending final approvals and coordination.

8. Financial Report

Copies of the Balance Sheet and Budget Report for Year-End September 30, 2023, were furnished, and Ms. Hoyt stated the year-end audit report is still on-going. The final audit report will be posted on the District's website once completed. Ms. Hoyt indicated the District is in a good financial position.

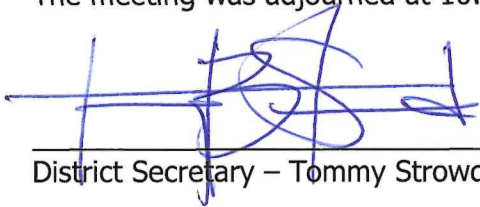
A motion was made by John I. Whitworth, III to approve the financial report, seconded by Carrie Parker Hill and approved unanimously.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion was made by Harry Raucher to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Carrie Parker Hill, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 A.M.



District Secretary – Tommy Strowd