Emerald Coast Republican Liberty Caucus
President Sherry Chapman
Vice President Rene Johnmeyer
Treasurer David Farrow
5June2025

Sherry Chapman Called the Meeting to Order
Jean Kimball Prayer
George Oedsma Pledge

✨ Summary

The meeting focused on the upcoming elections, the importance of voter participation, and discussions on local development and environmental protection. Key decisions included supporting candidates and addressing safety concerns related to land development. Additionally, infrastructure improvements, contractor accountability, and construction management were discussed, highlighting the need for community engagement and funding solutions.

Also, the meeting focused on addressing drainage issues in new developments, the need for stricter building regulations, and the challenges posed by private inspections in the area. Key decisions included exploring the implementation of time limits on building permits and discussing land swaps for economic development. Additionally, discussions centered around the need for high-paying job opportunities in Santa Rosa County, the importance of trade education for local youth, and concerns about election integrity.

📋 Outline

1. Election Participation • 00:01:34

- Early voting is currently taking place, and Nathan Bowles is the only candidate on the ballot.
- Election day is scheduled for June 10th, and attendees were encouraged to remind their networks to vote.

2. Candidate Introductions • 00:02:39

- Candidates present at the meeting were invited to introduce themselves.

- Ray Eddington expressed gratitude for past support and discussed his commitment to community issues.

3. Environmental Concerns • 00:04:48

- A request was made to support the well-field protection area, which supplies water to over half of Santa Rosa County.
- There was a discussion about following existing ordinances to enhance environmental protection.

4. Land Development Code Changes • 00:17:26

- Bobby Burkett reported on efforts to change the land development code to stop clear-cutting.
- A local builder was highlighted for successfully implementing natural buffers in new developments.

5. Safety Issues in Development • 00:19:40

- Concerns were raised about safety measures related to well-field protection areas and the potential risks of pollutants reaching the aquifer.
- The speaker emphasized the need for safety protocols in land development to prevent environmental contamination.

6. Infrastructure Improvements • 00:21:11

- East Milton is currently drilling, and there are ongoing efforts to improve safety measures.
- Roads in the district are being restriped and repaved, with Quintet Road scheduled for repaving from Wallace to the Canyon Line and Bridge.
- The district is considering doing its own striping to expedite the process and save costs.
- Street lights are being installed in high-traffic areas to enhance safety.
- Plans are underway to create a small park near the library for children.

7. Underground Tanks Controversy • 00:23:20

- There was confusion regarding a vote on allowing underground tanks in the well field protection area, with some members clarifying their positions.
- Concerns were raised about the county's liability and the need for better protection against lawsuits.
- The speaker emphasized the importance of voting with conscience and the challenges of making everyone happy.

8. District 4 Updates • 00:25:50

- Highway 87 is being paved, a project that took two and a half years to initiate.
- New traffic lights are being installed at the intersection of 98 and Motay.
- The park is undergoing renovations, including the installation of a dock and rewiring for improved facilities.

9. Contractor Accountability • 00:31:16

- There are ongoing frustrations with contractors not meeting deadlines and the need for stricter accountability measures.
- Discussions included the possibility of adding clauses to contracts to ensure contractors bear the costs of their mistakes.
- The importance of community feedback before votes on projects was emphasized to prevent future issues.

10. Sunshine Law Awareness • 00:40:14

- The speaker provided insights on the Sunshine Law, clarifying misconceptions about discussions among commissioners.
- Emphasis was placed on transparency and the importance of adhering to legal guidelines during meetings.
- The speaker reiterated their commitment to addressing clear-cutting issues in the community.

11. Construction Management and Job Security • 00:43:09

- There is a proposal to add five more people to the construction team to manage ongoing projects effectively.
- A significant portion (67%) of Santa Rosa County's income is tied to construction-related jobs, raising concerns about potential job losses if construction is halted.
- Stopping construction could lead to mass foreclosures and a decline in property values, affecting the entire community.

12. Infrastructure Issues and Funding • 00:45:41

- There is a pressing need to address infrastructure issues, with an estimated $360 million shortfall in funding.
- The community is facing challenges with road access, particularly on Berry Hill Road, which has become congested due to new housing developments.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding funding for road improvements, specifically the four-laning of Berry Hill Road.

13. Housing Development Concerns • 00:49:07

- There are concerns about the safety and sustainability of new housing developments in the face of potential hurricanes.
- The community is questioning the approval of new subdivisions without adequate infrastructure to support them.
- The need for a balance between growth and infrastructure development is emphasized, with calls to halt new approvals until existing projects are completed.

14. Tiny Home Communities Proposal • 00:53:09

- A proposal for tiny home communities was discussed as a solution to provide affordable housing options for young people.

- The average starting price for homes is currently around $329,000, making it difficult for many to enter the housing market.
- Tiny homes could be priced between $150,000 and $200,000, offering a more accessible option for first-time buyers.

15. Drainage and Flooding Issues • 00:59:03

- Concerns were raised about the drainage systems in new developments contributing to flooding in older homes.
- Suggestions were made to adjust grading practices to direct water flow towards the street to prevent flooding.
- The need for better drainage provisions in subdivisions was highlighted to protect existing properties from water damage.

16. Drainage Issues in New Developments • 00:00:00

- Concerns were raised about inadequate drainage in new developments, particularly in areas where multiple houses are built on small lots.
- There is a risk of flooding due to water runoff from new constructions, especially from Carl Booker Road.
- A proposal was made to require drainage plans for blocks larger than 125 feet.

17. Need for Stricter Building Regulations • 00:01:51

- The importance of including curbs, drainage, and sidewalks in new developments was emphasized to prevent flooding and ensure safety for pedestrians.
- A suggestion was made to impose time limits on construction permits to ensure timely development and adherence to zoning regulations.

18. Challenges with Private Inspections • 00:10:07

- The state of Florida allows private inspections, which has raised concerns about accountability and quality control in construction.
- There is a belief that the current system favors developers and does not adequately protect homeowners from substandard construction practices.

19. Economic Development and Land Swaps • 00:23:42

- The county is considering land swaps to facilitate the development of the Eastville Industrial Park, which is currently full.
- The goal is to attract high-paying jobs to the area to retain local families and support economic growth.

20. High-Paying Job Opportunities • 00:24:29

- There is a demand for high-paying jobs in Santa Rosa County, with Leonardo, an Italian helicopter business, being mentioned as a potential employer.
- Concerns were raised about new businesses bringing in their own staff rather than hiring locally, which could limit job opportunities for residents.

21. Trade Education and Workforce Development • 00:27:50

- The importance of promoting trade schools was emphasized, as skilled trades can offer lucrative salaries, such as plumbers earning $40-$45 an hour.
- There is a need for local youth to be trained and educated to meet the standards of higher-skilled jobs being introduced in the area.

22. Community Engagement and Support • 00:31:00

- The community was encouraged to support local candidates and participate in city council meetings to foster better governance.
- Acknowledgment was given to community members for their hard work and dedication to improving local governance and election processes.

23. Election Integrity Concerns • 00:33:14

- Patty Burke was recognized for her efforts in the Election Integrity Committee, which has expanded from 11 to 20 members.
- Issues were raised regarding the legality of vote-by-mail practices, with concerns about individuals voting without proper identification.

Part 1: https://webapp.sembly.ai/minutes-public/6we-f2d68493433a638572495c845690c0f3a7f808b9

Part 2: https://webapp.sembly.ai/minutes-public/6we-9583f763b22591b1d18286c6cc836cd21a8eabed

Motion to approve minutes Rene Johnmeyer and Susan Graff

Motion to Adjourn Christa Waite and Cindy Smith

Next Meeting 7August2025

SC/cew