March 31, 2015

Board of County Commissioners
301 N Olive Avenue   Ste. 1201
West Palm Beach, Florida  33401

Re: Staff Direction for Agricultural Reserve Master Plan Commercial Element

Dear Mayor Vana, Vice Mayor Berger, and Commissioners:

Thank you for your efforts in presenting an excellent Agricultural Reserve Workshop on March 24, 2015. Staff was well prepared and the public comment aspect was productive. Listening to the discussion among the commissioners was inspirational. Your attentiveness to the needs of individuals and the general population of Palm Beach County is appreciated. The following is a suggested path for the future of the commercial element of the Agricultural Reserve Master Plan.

The Alliance continues to be in favor of site-specific land use amendments for additional non-residential development in the Agricultural Reserve as the land use amendment process ensures that the application has been vetted through a formal public process and found acceptable to the Board of County Commissioners. The Alliance suggests that the square footage cap of 750,000 square feet already established in Policy 1.5-M of the Future Land Use Element be allocated to any new site specific land use amendment request.

The Alliance has calculated that approximately 220,000 square feet of the 750,000 square foot cap is going unused within the two existing TMD’s. If new projects were presented and not compelled to meet all the parameters of a TMD, but were acceptable to the County and the public as useful and viable commercial applications, the requested square footage might be extracted from the 220,000 square foot excess. In this way, the County would not be creating new artificial caps (such as the 2 million or 400,000 square feet that were suggested) for commercial development. We already have comprehensive plan language in place allowing 750,000 square feet of Commercial Low to be built in the Agricultural Reserve that will not be met by the two TMDs, so let’s extract the square footage from the excess and, if in the future that 220,000 square feet is utilized, then we could revisit an increase in square footage.

Sincerely,

Lori Vinikoor
Dr. Lori Vinikoor, Executive Vice President
Robert Schulbaum, President

Ccc: Verdenia Baker; Bob Weisman; Rebecca Caldwell; Jon MacGillis; Lorenzo Aghemo; Audrey Norman

FROM THE EVERGLADES TO THE OCEAN

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Legal Counsel: Joshua Gershin
September 29, 2014

Palm Beach County Planning, Zoning, & Building
ATT: Rebecca Caldwell, Director
2300 North Jog Road
West Palm Beach, Florida. 33411
Re: Agricultural Reserve Roundtable Discussion

Dear Ms. Caldwell:

Following BCC direction and under your supervision Staff has succeeded in bringing together interested parties and the public to contemplate changes to the Agricultural Reserve Comprehensive Plan. This is an ambitious project addressing multifaceted proposed changes. The current Development Plan has been generally successful, is technically detailed, and even a perceived minor text amendment requires study to grasp the resulting impact on established agricultural, environmental and water resource goals.

The Alliance has met with farmers, nursery owners and other interested parties over the past six months in preparation for the Roundtable Discussions. The Alliance also has a history of being “Guardians of the Agricultural Reserve” and addressing the needs of its member communities and the public as demonstrated by a successful request from the Alliance to the BCC for denial of a 2011 application to construct a biofuel processing facility in the Agricultural Reserve.

An Alliance survey of its Membership and the public indicated the following:

1. Commercial Development should be confined to the Atlantic Avenue and Lyons Road and Boynton Beach Boulevard and Lyons Road intersections.
2. No development is desired west of State Road 7/441.
3. Preserve Parcels should not support mulching facilities or other bioconversion industries which impact regional hydrology and water resources.
4. Smaller preserve parcels, even though not contiguous with larger ones would be desirable.
5. The addition of more residential units from the County TDR program or other source is not desirable.

The Alliance thanks you, Staff, and our Commissioners for your work on this project.

Sincerely,

Lori Vinikoor
Dr. Lori Vinikoor, Executive Vice President

Cc: Mayor Taylor, Commissioners Abrams, Burdick, Santamaria, Valeche, Vana; Lorenzo Aghemo; Jon MacGillis; Verdenia Baker, Bob Banks

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